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THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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Editorial

When one contemplates calmly and dispassionately the national life of Ireland at this moment, the things most evident are perhaps the abrupt severance of the present from the immediate past and the desperate efforts on every side to join up the national consciousness with a suitable and natural tradition.

Painfully and rather wistfully we are stretching out in search of some living organism to which we feel we belong and have a right to attach ourselves for the preservation of our vitality. For while we are to-day in the somewhat troubled position of trying to assert a national entity that has not yet fully declared itself, we feel deeply the need to knit ourselves with those elements in our past that will best help us to its disclosure.

Our very longing for fusion tends towards making us false to ourselves. For in our eagerness to think of ourselves as belonging to the civilisation that our historians and scholars have created for us, we run the eternal risk of mistaking the outward forms for the inner life. This is the great danger of our conscious pre-occupation with tradition. We become obsessed by the external forms of the past. We set them up like Molochs in the present, and stuff them with living victims. Ireland to-day is full of pre-conceived ideas to which we all either sacrifice or are sacrificed. It is not so we shall find the tradition we seek. To turn back towards the dead externals of the past is to fix the heart upon something already smitten by the destructive fire that perpetually burns up all that is lifeless and decayed. For it is not safe for man to set his gaze backward unless he can fix it upon that inner indestructible reality that bears within it the futurity of the spirit.

And our only hope of achieving the vitalizing fusion that we seek lies in the utter shattering of all our pre-conceptions and ceasing altogether from our fevered troubling over outward forms. If we are able to concentrate the inward vision on the past, we need not fear but that our national gods will be manifest in us. Only by such contemplation may we hope to grow one with all that is noble in our national ancestry. Not what we say, or will, but what we become can make us aware, or oblivious of our tutelary heroes.

* * * *

By the lamented death of Miss Susan Mitchell the Ireland of to-day has suffered a loss which it can ill afford, for in her work there are to be found qualities which are all too rare in the work of her contemporaries. Keen satire and kindliness of heart, depth of thought with lightness of touch are everywhere evident in her writing, whether it be in book form or in magazine. To the general reader I imagine that Susan Mitchell will be best remembered for that exquisite book of satire, *Aids to the Immortality of Certain Persons in Ireland*; a book which in its class stands alone; but for those who knew her better I think that some of the poems in *The Living Chalice* will provide a more lasting memory.



A Foreign Chronicle.

"There is no doubt that Italy is to-day the liveliest and most active of the major nations of the West." This is the judgment of a Russian observer of European literature and thought, which I find in a recent number of the *London Mercury*. Prince Mirsky, this observer, adds: "She is to-day what Germany was sixty years ago—with all the dangerous implications of this position."

The relation of Italian men of letters and artists to this new Italy that wants "to live dangerously" thus becomes a question of considerable moment. It is difficult to believe, however, that intellectual movements in Italy will ever allow themselves to fall under a sort of state control, as they are said to have done in Bismarckian Germany. The imagination of Italy has been excited under the experience of a dictatorship, and by the "strong" words of Mussolini; but there is little evidence to show that the intellect of the country has been disciplined or brought to a condition of docility under the new régime. Is it possible to imagine d'Annunzio becoming a poet of the State—to think of him as subjecting his aesthetic activity to the necessities of a given political situation? In his practical life, however, d'Annunzio will not allow even Mussolini to outdo him in patriotic fervour, as the neighbours of his retirement on Lake Garda know. His latest feat is the reconstruction of an Italian cruiser which he has caused to be built into the terrace of his garden and from which salutes are fired on occasion of national crisis and rejoicing. Twenty-seven were sent off on the night that Mussolini defied Germany on the Tyrolese issue. The guns are served by retired naval men supplied to the poet by the Government. Six months ago there was a meeting between d'Annunzio and Mussolini; d'Annunzio would not go to Rome, so the "Duce" had to go to Gardone, and the two "*condottieri*," as a frank reporter called them, fell on each other's necks, after long estrangement. That picture conjures up not the Roman Imperialism, to which Mussolini sometimes relates his dictatorship, still less British or German Imperialism in any epoch; it is of the Renaissance.

Another side of modern Italy is that shewn by Prezzolini in his *La Cultura Italiana*, a book to which I have already had occasion to refer in this correspondence. *La Cultura Italiana* has now been translated into French (Felix Alcan), and, I think, also into American; no one who is curious about the intellectual life

of modern Italy should neglect to read it. Prezzolini was at one time editor of *La Voce*, the Florentine organ of young Italy, where Papini first drew blood. That is now fifteen or twenty years ago.

The men of *La Voce* were engaged in the work of nation building, transvaluing all current local values, and much of their criticism was directed against the "provincial Italy of Umberto," a picturesque Italy dear to the tourist, but wanting in morale and energy. D'Annunzio in those days was the petted darling of French salons, and *La Voce* was anti-d'Annunzian. Thus Prezzolini, while regarding the author of the *Laudi* as an unique artist, objects to his being taken for a characteristic Italian, and finds that his influence on contemporary literature is not comparable to that of Croce or Gentile, for example, who are the dominating figures of his book. The provincial Italy of Umberto has disappeared; but d'Annunzio remains, and it would seem that the Italy of Fascist dream bears little resemblance to the ideal of *La Voce*; I observe, at least, that both Prezzolini and Papini are at the moment both objects of the fierce denunciation of the government press.

The provincial Italy of Umberto professed a liberal and democratic ideology, which *La Voce* had its part in undermining, as had the neo-Hegelian philosophies of Croce and Gentile. Fascismo profited, but in its present exalted mood it is disinclined to acknowledge its debt to the philosophers and arm-chair men; asking what these latter were doing when Mussolini marched on Rome, a form of abuse with which we are familiar in Ireland. "Mussolini," says one paper, "knows that history is made by action, and does not deduce the form of the future Italy from books, but prepares it"—in the light of his own inspired intuition. It is not surprising, in face of the deification of "il Duce," which is now what the content of Fascismo amounts to, and for which no philosophy was prepared, that there should be a movement, even in the very school of Croce and Gentile, for the rehabilitation of the "spirit" of liberalism, if not of its discredited forms.

European Liberalism has found a new exponent in Guido de Reggero, who was trained by Croce and Gentile and adheres to their idealism, which identifies history and philosophy. *La Storia del Liberalismo europeo* is the title of his book. A summary of its argument has been given by Professor Angelo Crispi in the

February issue of the London *Review of Reviews*. In de Ruggero's analysis "the history of modern relations between the State and the Churches, between the State and trusts, trade unions and corporations, indicates how the State, once the supreme organ of coercion, may become the supreme guardian of public rights while admitting the autonomous existence of increasing numbers of organisations that represent various interests and activities in the social and economic spheres as in the sphere of culture. In other words, Liberalism is able to recognise the positive, legitimate value of other systems, whereas other systems are incapable of recognising its value."

It is interesting to compare de Ruggero's views with those lately expressed by Gentile in his capacity as a member of the Commission appointed by Mussolini to inquire into the "fundamental relations between the State and all the forces which it must contain and guarantee." The Commission rejected on one hand "pure syndicalism"; on the other hand, the abstract, liberal State. It proposed as an alternative that corporations, trade unions, professional orders, and associations of specified interests should all be brought within the orbit of Fascismo, as organiser of national unity. "The state has its ends," says Gentile, "which are not those of any particular citizen, nor of any class of citizens, nor of any sum or total mass of citizens on a determined day. National unity is not something which exists already in a determined time. It has roots in the past, and from the present projects itself into the future, and lives to-day in so far as the vitality which is the fruit of centuries reaches forward to to-morrow and the remote future, and there considers and realises its greater destiny."

To some Fascisti, however, Gentile's doctrine, translated into politics, was not sufficiently authoritarian; and to his theory of "immanence" has been opposed the transcendental theory of the divine right. The transcendentalists quote St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Anselm—"Every man has an idea of a superior being, above whom it would not be possible to conceive a being more perfect"—claim to be the interpreters of a true Latin Christianity, and regard Mussolini as a man sent by God to govern Italy.

Though its worst enemies must admit that Italian Fascismo has achieved striking successes in the sphere of the practical, its best friends will allow to a certain disappointment in respect to

the theoretical and intellectual course of the movement. Herein Fascismo is sharply distinguished from the French reaction against democracy and its institutions. Maurras and his friends of *L'Action Française* are men to whom as thinkers and writers it is impossible not to accord respect; of effective action they have been incapable. It is true there are figures of great intellectual achievement among the adherents of Fascismo: the dramatist, Pirandello, for example; but such men for the most part are only incidentally Fascist, and do not profess to be political thinkers. Gentile has very ingenuously discovered points of contact between his philosophical system and the spirit and acts of Fascismo; but he is an interpreter, not an originator, in politics. Moreover, as I have shown, his interpretation is disputed by large numbers of Fascisti. The fact seems to be that Fascismo has not yet decided upon its intellectual direction, falling back at one moment upon the theory of absolutism, at another reaching forward, rather vaguely, towards radical and revolutionary conceptions. Fascismo, in short, has yet to decide whether history always repeats itself or never repeats itself; and although the latter conception is the more flattering to Mussolini, it has by no means wholly prevailed.

But what will interest people in Ireland most is to be told that the Fascist Government has now engaged on the task of abolishing "evil literature" from Italy, thus assuming the character of a guardian of public and private morals. Its prohibitionist legislation hits at imported picture papers like *La Vie Parisienne* and the literature of the French boulevards; but Anacreon and some of the other classics are not being spared. Editions of certain classical works have recently been sold in large numbers in Italian towns, and the Government, with its usual realism has surmised that the success of this trade must be due to something other than the growth of a sudden passion for the masterpieces of antiquity, considered as such, on the part of the Italian populace. Like Pussyfoot in America, this is class legislation. It affects the man in the street, not cultured men of leisure, or scholars. The Vatican press is pleased; but I should like to hear a comment from France on the Italian attempt to inaugurate a Latin puritanism. The theory is no doubt that the Puritan habit of mind contributes to national efficiency, as Anglo-Saxon history in two spheres illustrates. There has, however, been some Fascist criticism of the new legislation or decree, the nature of which

illustrates again the conflict of ideas that is going on within Fascismo itself. This criticism is based not on the *laissez faire* theory of government, nor on the "liberal" argument that coercion in matters of the mind always defeats its own ends, nor again on the aesthetic optimism which supposes that people's taste can be so cultivated that they will come always to prefer the "good" to the "bad." A combination of these three points of view has been adopted by our objectors at home to the proposed Irish censorship of books and newspapers. Some of the Fascist opponents of a censorship take the view, not that coercion defeats its own ends, but that the end proposed in this case is an undesirable one. It appears that the Futurists are particularly enraged. For Futurism holds that the citizens of the genuine Futurist State will be amoral in their private lives, and it is as opposed to traditional ethics as it is to traditional art. The Futurists say that the real force of Fascismo is to be traced to the spirit engendered in Italy by Marinetti in pre-war days, not to the idealist philosophy of Naples, Croce's or Gentile's, and still less of course to a Catholic revival.

H.



A Defence of the Abbey Theatre

** A Speech delivered at a Meeting of the Dublin Literary Society, on February 23rd*

BY W. B. YEATS.

Mr. Reddin complains that the Abbey Theatre has produced many bad plays ; that its Directors and play-writers are a "cult" ; that it cannot be national, not being "the expression of the entire people" ; that it uses the English language ; that we Directors, being not only "Cromwellians," but "stout Cromwellians," have invented a form of dialect that he who has "lived with the people of the western south has never heard" ; and, on top of all our other offences, that we have neither produced foreign masterpieces nor predominantly religious and political plays.

Now the last matter first. I do most anxiously assure Mr. Reddin that the Cromwellian mind has always loved religion and politics. We Cromwellian Directors laid down this principle twenty-five years ago, and have not departed from it : never to accept or reject a play because of its opinions. When we began our work, it was the accepted principle that an artistic or a literary society should have nothing to do with religion or politics. We could have had far greater support—greater financial support—had we made the usual declaration, but we refused to do so, because we considered all thought legitimate dramatic material. A good many years had to pass before people understood that we were sincere, that we were not trying to undermine anybody's political or religious opinions. Indeed that was only understood when many plays of different tendencies had been shown. Our first trouble was with the Unionists, but we have had to fight all parties, and are prepared to go on doing so. "Kathleen ni Houlihan," "The Piper," "The Rising of the Moon," "The Lost Leader," "The Plough and the Stars," Miss McArdle's revolutionary plays, and many others are political, but political in different ways. We have no object but good plays, made out of whatever thought is most exciting to the minds of those who make them.

At first especially, many of our plays were in dialect, for what

* One cannot recall an impromptu speech with verbal accuracy, nor is it necessary that one should. This is, however, the substance of what I said.—W. B. Y.

first attracted our dramatists was that life of "folk," which in every country is most obviously national, most obviously historical and ancient. The Norwegian dramatists did precisely the same. "Understand the saga by the peasant, and the peasant by the sage," that was their phrase. But we are, he says, Cromwellians, and can, therefore, know nothing of the matter. All, at this late day, have mixed strains of blood—even Mr. Reddin, I imagine—but I think we Abbey Directors can find strains of our blood that came into this country before Cromwell. I think the first Synge came in the time of Elizabeth; but whatever the date, and whatever their strains of blood, Lady Gregory and John Synge were the first educated man and woman who spoke their whole souls in the dialect of the people; the first to see in that dialect not a vehicle of farce, but of intellect. That dialect—the dialect spoken in the west and south of Ireland—is an ancient form of the English language. It has a history of some hundreds of years, and is derived from two main sources. Its syntax is partly that of Irish, and its vocabulary is partly that of Tudor English. Synge and Lady Gregory had enough Irish to understand the syntax. Synge studied ancient Gaelic under H. d'Arbois de Jubainville and, though always half an invalid, modern Irish in the hardship of an Arran cottage. Lady Gregory had, in her "Cuchulain of Muirthemne" and her "Gods and Fighting Men," made the most famous translations ever made from the Irish language, and she had, before writing a word of her plays, filled notebook after notebook with the English of her neighbourhood. Furthermore Synge and Lady Gregory knew Tudor English—Lady Gregory especially, for when I knew her first, the *Morte d'Arthur* was her book of books. I do not believe that Mr. Reddin's knowledge equals that of either; but if it does, that is not sufficient for me—the farmer and the sailor have knowledge, but we do not accept their opinion as to the merits of a landscape or a sea-scape. I should want to be certain that he had an equal understanding before I weighed his opinion against that of Lady Gregory and John Synge. Of course, Synge and Lady Gregory no more reproduce dialect like a phonograph than a great painter copies land and sea like a photograph—"art is art because it is not Nature." They have selected, but selected from a knowledge few dialect writers of any country have equalled. Sir Walter Scott made a single lowland Scottish dialect

serve for all Scotland; and the Irish novelists, or the greater number of them, made Munster, Leinster and Connaught talk like a Dublin jarvey. Scott and the Irish novelists did their work according to their knowledge and their purpose, and were justified.

It is a recognised rule of criticism that you should never criticise at all till you have seen or tried to see what your author has done or tried to do. Let Mr. Reddin take down some anthology of prose—English, French or German—I care not what the language, and ask himself if he cannot find passages equal to any there of a like species—I do not mean by this in dialect—in Synge's "Playboy," in the last Act of his "Deirdre," in Lady Gregory's "Jail Gate," or here and there among her comedies, or among the slight dialect of her translations from the Gaelic. He will find that these passages are not only expressed in a way peculiar to this country, but that they are the classic prose of modern Ireland.

But he has more than our dialect against us—there are all those bad plays. Of course we have produced bad plays, some to give their authors experience, and some—and in these there is always good—because they are popular. Until a year ago the Abbey was practically bankrupt. It had survived war and civil war, and I assure you an audience gets very thin when there is firing in the streets. Time and again we Cromwellians had to go to our friends, some of these Cromwellians too, and raise money; but a time came when we could do this no longer. When we were an independent nation, it did not become the dignity of that nation that we should go to London, where we got £2,000 the last time, to save the dramatic movement of Ireland. Then the Government gave us our subsidy, and peace restored our audience. From that moment we began weeding out poor plays, improving our scenery, and bringing into our repertory plays from other countries. We have always played a certain number of foreign masterpieces, and for a long time we guided ourselves in this by the principle that, as our object was to create an Irish theatre, we would translate such foreign masterpieces as threw light upon our Irish plays. Because of their likeness in a part of their method to the work of Synge and Lady Gregory, we have long had plays by Molière in our repertory; and while we still hoped for an Irish religious drama, we produced a number of medieval "mysteries" and "moralities." Lately we have chosen

foreign masterpieces without first thinking of our Irish plays, because an Irish school of drama has been created and does not need the same anxious fostering. We have always wished to do more foreign masterpieces than we have been able to, but they seldom succeed with the audience—I think I see signs of a change in that matter, but it will come slowly. It takes even longer to train an audience than a company of actors. You cannot have a national theatre without creating a national audience, and that cannot be done by the theatre alone, for it needs the help of schools and newspapers, and of all teachers of the people. The theatre can go only a little ahead of the people, and it can only continue to do that if Directors and shareholders agree not to take a penny in profits.

But I had forgotten. We play and act in English because we are Cromwellians, and that is the worst charge of all. Mr. Reddin is mistaken—we play and act in English because that is the language in which our audience thinks. Years ago Lady Gregory and I persuaded that other Cromwellian, Dr. Hyde, to write—I know he will not mind my saying this—those admirable little plays of his, those plays where there is often a humour so beautiful and an eloquence so touching. We thought that we were helping to create a Gaelic theatre in country villages where Gaelic is the language of thought. That theatre almost came into existence, but it was destroyed because subordinated* to propaganda, for the natural man is bored by propaganda. But now a new Gaelic theatre has arisen which will not commit that error. We are glad it uses the same stage that we do, and we wish it success. If the mass of the people come to think in Gaelic, it will become the national theatre of Ireland, but not till then. People can only act and sing and write well or enjoy these things well in the language of their thought.

Mr. Reddin is too abstract; he has a theatre in his head, a kind of spiritual substance out of time and space. An intellectual movement of any kind moves in narrow limits—a few people, a spot of the earth—and it grows out of the knowledge that it finds and does, not what it should according to any man's theory, but

* Subordinated also, as I pointed out in *Samhain* at the time, to bad stage management and worse rehearsal. (See my *Plays and Controversies*, pages 35 and 36, and elsewhere). The first Gaelic play ever performed in a theatre, "The Twisting of the Rope," was performed under our management. It had no successor, because it is impossible to specialise in two languages.—W. B. Y.

what it can or must. If those few people are interested in the villages, it goes to villages for its vehicle of expression ; and if they are interested in slums, it must go there for a vehicle, and when that interest is exhausted it turns to something else, and always the greater the success, the more marked are the limits. A master is known, somebody has said, by the fact that he works within limits. Of one thing we may be quite certain : at no time, neither in the beginning nor in its final maturity, does an intellectual movement express a whole people, or anybody but those who are built into it, as a victim long ago was built into the foundation of a bridge. Sometimes if those few people are great enough, if there is amongst them a Sophocles or a Shakespeare, or even some lesser genius who has the sincerity of the Great Masters, they give their character to the people.



Lake Dwellers

For M. J. MACMANUS.

Hush, wordy one, hush !
No sound, no stir,
Not a bulrush
Sways on the water ;
Not a wind haws
On pools where dawn was
Plunged by an otter.

For mating time, I
Stocked in dull water
Boughs from the wild sky ;
Stapling our dwelling,
With raw lime and larch—
Over that lake marsh,
Scared to the lapwing.

So drowsy head, rest
Deep in those feathers—
Piled from some high nest
Of moulting wild geese—
Resting the bright head,
Shyly on our bed,
Quilted with peace.

While to those isles, grown
Heavy with dew shine,
Thin woods have shown,
In broken dusklight,
The sword light of kernes,
Float as twin hems,
Fording the swift night.

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But shining love, sleep
Opens frail worlds—
The foolish fish leap
Through stars by our threshold
Breaking on curds
Of dew light, where shore birds,
Nod in the cold.

Ah, soon you shall sink
Through charms of slumber ;
The rush candles wink,
Yet no shadow creeps ;
No sound, no stir—
The gentle lake dweller
Sleeps.

F. R. HIGGINS.



Darrell Figgis

BY ANDREW E. MALONE.

Some people are born fated to provide material for the scoffer and the maker of caricatures. Their every action, almost their every thought gives opportunity for malice; and all the time they seem to be quite unconscious of their fate. They are never forewarned, and they go through life with the set determination of a character in a tragedy by Euripides. There is a chorus to sing their doom and to make the similitude complete. In our day it is very difficult to decide whether the chorus is the cause of tragedy or merely the chronicler of it. But in an era when fame is largely a matter of newspaper advertisement it naturally follows that reputation is largely a matter of gossip. Gossip, in chorus or solo is generally malicious, and "seeing Shelley plain" is an experience from which it rarely recovers. That must be why prophets are little esteemed in their own countries, even when the countries are conscious that such prophets exist at all. The prophets are surrounded by the little cliques, and the little cliques are too close to be anything other than the purveyors of malicious gossip. The isolation of Olympus, or even of Parnasse, is no longer possible, though there can be no doubt that it is very desirable, for poets and such as may feel inspired towards prophecy. The suburban groove is too narrow, too strait, too well-worn for them, and their slightest variation from its strait conventionality leaves them helplessly at the mercy of malicious gossip. They are not as the others, and because they do not behave as the herd behaves, and conform in every little detail to the standards of the herd, they are outlawed. They are as Wontolla, the Wolf, in Kipling's story: "For Wontolla means outlier—one who lies out from the pack."

Darrell Figgis was as Wontolla—he lay out from every pack. He was one of those born fated to provide material for the scoffer and the purveyor of malicious gossip, and he lived up to his destiny. It was not that he was gifted with great creative genius, but he had undoubtedly the gift, or the curse, of attracting attention to himself and an unusual facility for making enemies. In the course of his comparatively short life he probably made more enemies than the average person would contrive to make did he live to be as old as Methuseleh. It was not that he chose

deliberately to make enemies instead of friends, but the result was the same as if he had made a deliberate choice. He certainly desired friends, but he knew that he had none. He had no capacity for friendship, he had none of that amiable expansiveness that makes friendship possible. He had formed, evidently very early in his life, a conception of himself, and in the effort to live up to that conception he had killed, or perhaps merely hidden, all that was spontaneous or generous in his personality. Very charming he certainly was, generous he was not, he had nothing of prodigality in him, no abounding vitality; he was frugal, thrifty, even miserly in everything he did. It was not that he never gave. It was only that he never gave greatly, never gave spontaneously or joyously, never gave without a very great effort. He seemed never to give without counting the cost and the possibility of increased return to himself. He was as Sir Willoughby Patterne, without that gentleman's sly imbecility. He was so much the master of himself that he could never let loose his grip. Such complete mastery might satisfy the late Mr. Samuel Smiles, but it is fatal to complete intimacy in human life. When the grip is once relaxed, as it was with Figgis, it can never again be tightened. The mechanism is smashed beyond repair, the bulk-heads are broken, and the little watertight compartments are completely flooded out.

Great qualities of various kinds Figgis undoubtedly had, but they were all kept in check by his egocentric mentality. He was engaged from time to time in many of life's most engrossing activities, but none of them would seem to have moved him deeply. He was possessed of talent of a very high order, but even his talent passed without adequate recognition. He walked the streets as if he were very much concerned to ignore them and their thronging masses of his fellow-humans, as if the life of his time held little or nothing to interest him longer than a passing glance. His interest in his fellow-humans was but slight, and it is very doubtful indeed if life had for him any deep significance or compelling attraction. In books and in thought his interest seemed to be concentrated. He had passed much of his early life in business, and though he remained always a "business" man, trade and the making of money could not hold him. His detestation of trade and business is expounded in the chapters of *Jacob Elthorne*, where the dull routine of an office almost drives Jacob

to desperation. Yet it is very highly probable that he would have been a great success in business, as he had all the qualities that seem to go to the making of merchant princes. He had more brains than millionaires usually seem to have, he was accurate and methodical in everything he did, he had a dominating personality and a power of command which would keep subordinates in their places, and he had that aloof coldness which is as great an asset in business as it is a liability in social life. That business life merely bored him shows that he was possessed of imaginative power beyond that of the average "business" man. And he had sufficient control of himself to get out of the rut before its influence became too strong for him. Perhaps it was that great effort, which is made only by the infinitesimally few, that marked him so deeply in his after life and which ultimately made the circumstance of his death.

He left business and turned to literature and journalism in London. He had published two small volumes of poems, and was something of a figure in the literary life of the city. He was, indeed, counted one of the very promising young men of English literature. He was definitely English then, more English than, say, Shaw or Lynd, and he could write of the Czar of Russia from the viewpoint of "we who are free." During these early years there was nothing distinctively Irish about his writing except, perhaps, his enthusiastic appreciation of the Irish Drama, and more particularly the plays of J. M. Synge. He was the dramatic critic for a well-known London periodical, and he used every advantage that his position afforded to bring Irish plays and playwrights to the notice of the English public. It was only when he came to live in Western Ireland, in Achill, that Ireland began to colour his writing, and out of Achill came his nearest approach to poetic expression. Despite the prominent position he occupied in the journalism of London, neither the press nor the public took much interest in his early work. "He has an abundant gift of poetic eloquence," said *The Times* in its review of *The Crucibles of Time* on its appearance in 1911, "which enables him to embroider richly any theme which he selects." Faint praise, which was simply damning at a time when England could count her aspiring young poets in scores, and many of whom were producing work of the highest class. Even his *Shakespeare*, published in 1911, excellent though it undoubtedly is in many ways, was

overshadowed by a little book with the same title published by John Masfield about the same time. His first novel, *Broken Arcs*, published in the same year, had to stand beside the first novels of such writers as D. H. Lawrence, Compton Mackenzie, J. D. Beresford and W. L. George, *Howard's End* by E. M. Forster, *The Patrician* by John Galsworthy, of Gilbert Cannan, Hugh Walpole, Frank Swinnerton, and a host of others of almost equal calibre. Many of these works were of high quality and distinction, and in the spate Figgis's work was submerged, so it never received even the attention that its merit deserved. He was completely overshadowed by the many young English writers who have since achieved that fame which he so ardently coveted and so anxiously desired.

In Ireland the field for the novelist was fairly open. Irish poetry and drama had both made deep impressions upon the literary world, but the Irish novel had not achieved equal distinction. It may have been but coincidence, or it may have been conscious imitation of Synge, that made Darrell Figgis go to live in Achill about 1912. It must have become quite plain to him that fame in England would be very difficult to achieve. He had published five books since 1909, and none of them had received more than passing notice in England, while Irish writers of talent equal to his were achieving fame, if little else, in their own country and abroad. So he came to live in Ireland, and quickly discovered Irish nationality; unfortunately he also discovered Irish politics. This discovery of Irish nationality was of great importance and significance to him and was to have a deep influence in his future work in prose and verse. The discovery of politics cannot, however, be thought of as anything but a great misfortune. Had Synge also been caught by politics, what a loss literature and drama would have suffered! Figgis hastened to make known his discovery of Irish nationality by an article under that title in *The English Review*, to which he had been a frequent contributor, for June, 1913. This article is worthy of notice because of its objective attitude, and because it is written with all the fervour of a convert. "It is not enough," he wrote, "to stand in the city of Galway, remembering that in the fifteenth century it was one of the chief ports of the British Islands, having its commerce with the Levant, Canary, Italy, France, England and Spain, and to see its houses 'all of hewed stone up to the top' in disrepair, and the city in

disorder. Such decay of a one-time material greatness is only a cause of depression. There are, on the other hand, certain elements in the spirit of the nation showing clearly that the old laws and institutions on which that greatness was erected, which are, in fact, the very form and being of its nationality, are still actively alive, if not in the ordered existence of intelligent memory, at least in the way of an energetic instinct." This energetic instinct he thought he had found in the survival of the clan spirit and the struggle for the control of the land. So far did he push his clan survival idea that he supposed Ireland to have initiated the co-operative movement, whereas, in fact, the co-operative idea and method were introduced into Ireland from England. The story of a woman of Galway who refused payment for refreshment when she found that her guest was a poet is told with an English blandness which quite overlooked the fact that living Irish poets were being read and appreciated more outside Ireland than within her shores. Every prospect pleased him then, and man was not vile. Man was aristocratic where the descendant of a King of Connacht earned a livelihood as a cobbler. Highly moral, honest and law-abiding in the terms of the Brehon Code, he found the people, and so testifies to the people of England. Even the boycott he found to be quite legal, tracing it to the *eric* of the old Irish law. "Ireland has her customs over which one may affectionately linger, yet which remain mainly a matter of wayward interest. But she has also her memory, and it is by virtue of that she achieves national unity and national power. As has been seen, whenever she seeks to express herself she does so in terms of that memory. Whenever she reaches forward to a swift and vindicating attack, to any fierce protest, it is usually because the contents of that memory have been attacked or affronted; and her protest is from the centre of her memory, and couched in terms of it, because she is chiefly concerned with throwing back the affront along the lines of its own approach. In so doing she achieves that strange irony of an aristocratic and conservative people appearing in a revolutionary guise. It is a remarkable position. The very irony of it is one of the chief things that has led to her being so profoundly misunderstood. But the situation is essentially a simple one. She has her polity, her civilisation, her institutions, in which things she has couched her nationality, and in which things she is attesting every day that her nationality is still a

breathing and a vital thing awaiting its renewed expression." So did he announce his discovery of the "hidden Ireland," and all his work from 1913 till his death a few months ago was permeated with Irish history, politics and customs. The breath and vitality of Irish nationality had entered into him, and henceforth his work contained an element that will be sought in vain in the work he did in England. Whether Ireland had entered into his soul it is difficult to say. It is certain, however, that his Irishness was not merely what it was thought to be by so many of his detractors in Dublin. It is only necessary to compare the dull monotony of *Broken Arcs*, written in the current English manner, with the throbbing vitality of *Children of Earth* to know that he had been radically altered by Ireland.

In the ten years between 1913 and 1923 his work was entirely Irish in spirit and setting. Those years yielded thirteen volumes of verse, novels, essays, politics and economics, many of which are only of propagandist value, diminishing with the diminution of the necessities which produced them. His histories, *The Historic Case for Irish Independence*, published in 1918, *The Gaelic State*, published a year earlier, and *The Economic Case for Irish Independence*, published in 1920, with his two *Chronicles of Jails*, have now, perhaps, lost the interest that they at one time certainly possessed. The troubled years from 1916 to 1921 made such writing necessary, and Figgis gave to such pamphlets something of the distinction which otherwise they had lacked. Was it merely to keep in the limelight that he did these things? Was it to keep in the limelight that he spent so much of his time in jails? These questions have only to be written to be answered emphatically. Yet when whispered in the course of gossip they do not answer themselves! But no man goes to jail for fun or for fame, and no man could toil and suffer for Ireland as Figgis most certainly did without faith in the cause that he advocated. Insincere in much he may have been, but his faith in Ireland was as deep and as sincere as it well could be.

The ideal of the Gaelic State had completely captivated his imagination even so early as 1913. It made his study of "*Æ*" published in 1916, something of more than literary value, though as a piece of literary criticism it is of very great value indeed. To realise his ideal of the Gaelic State in Ireland he strove unceasingly for many years until perhaps he saw, as he must have

seen, that his ideal was not that for which Ireland as a whole was striving. And the Gaelic State was for him a legal and an economic state; not merely a state in which the people would speak Irish only for the sake of speaking Irish. He shared "Æ's" belief that it is the quality of its thought, and the standard of its life, that must make a nation great and distinctive. He had, in consequence, nothing in common with the mass of chatterers to whom the word is more important than the thought, and the spelling more important than the word. Upon custom and memory he would have based his Gaelic State and have it evolve naturally from these. With approval he quoted the words of Edmund Spenser, "The difference of manners and customes doeth followe the difference of nations and people." His ideal was, perhaps, somewhat too subtle for politicians who can find no virtue in anything but broad effect in black and white. Arthur Griffith understood and appreciated the effort. As a politician he merely wasted his energy and his talent. The members of the Dail treated him as a joke in which they soon lost interest; they demonstrated their lack of interest by trooping out of the House when he rose to speak. Such behaviour probably made him revise his opinion upon the inherent aristocracy of the Irish people. It certainly embittered his later days, and made cynically hard a nature that had much of sweet benevolence in it.

Figgis will not be remembered as a great poet, his verse alone would hardly entitle him to be called a poet at all. Its emotional content is small and it is not very distinguished in its diction. It is the verse of an "intellectual," of which one English reviewer said "he has the Miltonian gift of poetic philosophy." The matter might well be left at that had he not written his *Songs of Acaill*, in which he reached heights which his earlier verse, and some of his later verse too, would have suggested to be beyond his reach. Obviously he was affected by his surroundings; the primitive wildness of Achill stirred him so deeply that the songs have feeling and not thought only. The sea and the hills stirred a responsive chord in his nature, and in Achill he achieved poetry. Thought and philosophy are both forgotten in the grandeur of the scenes about him, and he abandoned himself to their influences. Such abandonment must have been very difficult for him, his control of himself was so strait and so rigid. An iceberg seemed as likely to succumb to emotion as he, yet as a judge and a critic

of poetry he was unsurpassed in his time, and his taste was impeccable. His defences against the world were too strong to permit him to be a great poet, though when the defences had been smashed perhaps he might have achieved greatness. But when his defences were broken he died, and there are only the results of the partial breach made by Achill upon which to judge him as a poet. Had Achill smashed his defences completely, his verse might all have been poetry, but then his entire life would have been different and the tragedy of its end would have been averted. But that is mere speculation. Meanwhile there are the *Songs of Acaill* and *Children of Earth* by which to judge Figgis as a poet.

In *Cruachan* is the Mount of Transfiguration :

Terrible are the places where the inner light is thrown
 Making the outer darkness full of shadows dread and
 strained,
 But the earth is mapped and singing joy is known
 When once the Mount of Vision has been won and gained.

And in *Inisgallun* is the fury of wind and water in desolate splendour :

The winds are roaring out of the West,
 Where the clouds are in stormy saffron drest,
 And the curlew and wild geese are calling and crying
 Over the straits of Inisgallun,
 The heron and cormorant wailing and sighing,
 Mingling a wild and an endless tune.

" World beyond the search of sight " he sought in Achill, in its peace and its glorious wildness :

And I yearn to run on the wings of the wind
 To seek you out if I may ;
 Unutterably longing to find
 Your borders beyond the courts of my mind,
 So near, yet so far away.

In *Anach* he seems to have found the peace that he sought

There is no peace now however things go,
 No peace where the ways of men ring loud,
 Save in a secret place that I know
 Hidden as in a cloud.

All the high hills stand clustering round
Arched to protect it from trouble and noise,
The great strong hills that sing without sound,
And speak with no voice.

There lies Caorog, the mute low lake,
And Bunnafreimhe lying aloft,
Peacefully sleeping, or even if they wake,
Lapping low and soft.

Upon the high hilltops the heather may be crying,
And over the hilltops the voices of men are heard,
But here only water lapping and sighing,
Or the wail of a bird.

Peace, peace, and peace from the inner heart of dream,
More full of wisdom than speech can tell,
Dropt like a veil round the show of things that seem
With an invisible spell.

When he deserted Achill and came to Dublin to take part in the political struggle he ceased to write verse. His name will probably be kept before the world by the makers of Irish anthologies, which is a thriving industry and may long remain so, to whom the *Songs of Acaill* will offer a temptation that they will be unable to resist. The remainder of the verse was as dead when it was published as it has since remained.

His prose work is a different matter, particularly his five novels and the volume of critical work. His first novel, *Broken Arcs*, published in 1911, is a competent piece of work, somewhat dull and ponderous, and with nothing to raise it above the level of the many novels published in London in its year. It is English in its conception and in its execution, and, except for its descriptions of nature, might have been written by any young Englishman just down from Oxford. *Jacob Elthorne*, published in 1914, is very largely autobiographical, containing passages of great beauty and of acute criticism. Jacob comes to Ireland, which he had not seen for thirty years, and the charm of the country entralls him. It is the life story of a young man from birth to marriage, with something of the manner of *Sinister Street*, which was then the fashionable form for the novel, but also very much of the manner and the matter of Figgis. *Jacob Elthorne* deserves a much wider

appreciation than it has yet had. It was published in the shadow of the war, and from that shadow it has never emerged despite the fact that it is a much better novel than many which have since brought fame to their authors. But *Children of Earth*, published in Dublin in 1918, is undoubtedly Figgis's masterpiece and one of the finest novels of its time. It is a symphony in words, powerful as Wagner and soothing as Beethoven. It is difficult to think of *Children of Earth* other than in terms of music. It is written in words, but it is a story in sound. "There was an infinity of music in the roaring that filled the night. The texture of sound was as complicated in its intimacies as it was terrifying in its vastness. It was both organ-like and organic. While the congregated sons of power sang each his note to the buffets of wind that tore at their sides, swept upon them, above them, and around them—so each blade of bog-grass, each blade of swaying heather, each bulk of sodden moss, each stream that rushed to the valley, each pool of bog-water, each hummock had its individual voice. It was yet the voice of open spaces. There was a surge and a sway, a vast impetus of freedom, in that music to declare that neither bush nor tree in that inky darkness intercepted the course of the wind with an alien cry. The sound was all of movement. Freedom, distance, space and speed were the indissoluble constituents of that hymning of Earth, even when it was most complicated in its texture. Its very fury had a gesture of gauntness. Its very frenzy was severe and stern. Through a darkness that crushed the brain came the sense of wide space and unstaying speed." In this book is the West of Ireland as it has never before been presented in words. In the primitively wild strength of mountain and storm the people find the strength to bear with a life that has in it nothing of the grace of modern civilisation. In *Children of Earth* is the western seaboard of Ireland between covers. It is an Irish novel that simply must not be overlooked. Well might Ernest Boyd say that it was one of the novels that helped to bring the Irish novel back into literature. It is itself literature of a high order, compelling in its power, astonishing in its dexterity, and revealing in its exposition of the life of Western Ireland. It has all the grandeur and the terror of elemental forces; a book that might have been written by Thomas Hardy in collaboration with Joseph Conrad. The *Manchester Guardian*, than which there is no better judge, said of

it: "This book is moulded on a great and classic plan, with nature in all her moods dominant as were the gods in Greek tragedy; with the talking of crofters and fisher-folk round cottage fires or in the inn-parlour as its chorus, and with its central figure as strangely harassed by temperament, or fate, as ever was here in Æschylus. . . Only a poet could safely handle such a theme without anti-climax, and this is a poet's book in which imagination never steps down from the heights from which it started, and in which an unfailing sense of beauty and dignity is shown equally on the great canvas of tempest or in the miniature of the casual talk of the peasantry. . . . It is a book an Englishman would be as unlikely to write as he would be to deny its strength and beauty." Even such praise did not get the book the appreciation it deserved; its fate was no better than that of its predecessors, but sometime it will be recognised for the great novel it certainly is. *The House of Success*, published in 1921, is a disappointment after *Children of Earth*. Its political atmosphere is too close, and the great power of the earlier novel is nowhere discernible. It is, however, a good presentation of "the history of Ireland from Parnell to Sinn Féin" in the story of the vicissitudes of a single family. The fifth novel was published under a pseudonym and was never publicly acknowledged, though it is now generally known that it was the work of Figgis. *The Return of the Hero* caused something of a sensation when it was published in 1923, and its author, "Michael Ireland," was hailed by the press of Ireland and England as a new bright star in the literary firmament. It is Figgis with a difference, but very little difference; it is Figgis the philosopher, the thinker, at his best. It is an imaginative reconstruction of Irish mythology in which Oisín returns to Ireland and meets Saint Patrick. The old Oisín is faced with new ideas which bewilder him, and in the resultant contest there is a display of wit and irony, of grace and satire, that makes the book a delight to read. In it one is brought back to the Gaelic State again, and behind its glamour and its humour there is a philosophy that has in it something of pessimism and disillusionment. It is a great book, which richly merited all the good things that were said of it when it appeared. Figgis produced two great "novels" in *Children of Earth* and *The Return of the Hero*, and they should be sufficient to keep his memory green for many years to come. Many reputations are more insecurely based.

It was his critical work that brought Figgis most prominence during his lifetime, and it is perhaps fitting that his criticism should be so nobly enshrined as it is in the sumptuous volume, *The Drawings and Paintings of William Blake*, which was published by Messrs. Benn shortly after his death. It is a fitting monument to Blake no less than to Figgis, with whom Blake was always a strong and abiding influence. It is a wonderful book in every way; in its magnificently reproduced pictures, in the long and very complete introduction by Figgis, in its exhaustiveness, and in the beauty of its printing and binding. It is a delightful book; a book to treasure for all time. Throughout his life Figgis had been an assiduous student and constant admirer of Blake's work in words and pictures. His studies and his admiration combine to make his last book something apart in the growing number of books devoted to Blake. As a critic Figgis had few equals in his time. He had read widely and deeply, and he had an unerring instinct for the best work. For the slipshod and the mediocre he had little mercy, and for good work he was never sparing in his praise. With Blake, Browning and Meredith he was always comfortable, and these three were his standards. He was himself something like the work of these three, elusive and mystical, yielding nothing without a hard struggle. The arena of Irish politics was no place for such a man, and why he ever entered that arena is the great mystery of his life. Ireland certainly captivated him, enthralled him, dominated and worried him, but Ireland's politicians suspected and thwarted him. Had he remained in England he would have had an easier, and perhaps a happier, life. He might have given the world his *Blake*, but then the world would never have had *Children of Earth* or *The Return of the Hero*. These three books make adequate justification for the life of Darrell Figgis.

Well, what is silence, or what speech,
 But a smile on the lips of growth
 (Whether old or young, and both are one) ?
 What we have learned to know we know.
 It was our Destiny bid us go
 Where the old worn years together flow
 And merge, pass and are done.
 We have gathered our fill of fruit from each ;
 We have been taught and have learned of both.

Little Decameron

By GWEN JOHN.

In that vague, happy epoch before the war a group of people, mostly young, is scattered on a green plateau on a hill in Merioneth. The scenery holds all possible charm of mountain, sea and estuary. In this ideal position they have listened to a lecture, and now are taking tea. One young man, with shock head, receding chin, and splendid physique, lies asleep on the sward. He wears flannels, and his feet are bare. The part of hostess is taken by an elderly woman in spectacles, very conventional (apparently) and very kind. Her bearing suggests a cathedral city. A young man with long hair is declaiming as he hands cups of tea. Most of the young people are Cambridge undergraduates of both sexes. The men are strikingly athletic, the women rather nervy and over-educated: most of them are members of an amateur socialist society.

YOUNG MAN: We need to rid ourselves of a great deal of cant about sex, and I think we shall! We men and women of the new generation aren't going to tolerate the tyranny of inhibitions to which we don't subscribe. In ten years' time——

NINA (*a girl of seventeen*): Chuck it, comrade. In ten years' time you'll be on the shelf. Speak of what you understand. Present only for us.

YOUNG MAN: Right, Nina. But it will be interesting to see what comes of all this! (*He indicates with a wave of his hand the talent around him*).

A CHARMING LADY (*of fifty odd, who has been inveigled here by her more advanced but less adventurous daughter*): Who was the emphatic young man who contradicted the lecturer, and was so very illuminating about the—the darker side of life?

YOUNG MAN: That's Browne. Isn't he splendid? Of course, I know he's a bit of a shock to the Victorians, but that is the way to get a move on.

CHARMING LADY: I care nothing about his morals, but his mother ought to tell him not to pull such faces when he speaks.

YOUNG MAN: I'll tell him what you say. That is constructive criticism, he'll be glad of it.

CHARMING LADY : For goodness' sake don't tell him ! He'll hate me.

YOUNG MAN : But I must, and he won't hate you a bit. That's one of the rules here. We all tell people what we think. Browne !—the prioress—he calls you the prioress—Chaucer's, of course—the prioress says you pull faces when you make a speech.

CHARMING LADY : That's too bad. What ought I to say ?

BROWNE : Does she say that ? I'm so glad she noticed me. (*Coming over*). I'll try not to any more. Prioress—thank you for the introduction. May I borrow your car for a socialist meeting on the sands to-morrow ?—I should walk before it with the dinner-bell and a red flag. It would be such a draw. May I ?

PRIORESS : Certainly, if you'll take me in it.

BROWNE : Oh, of course ! It would be no good at all without you. We want someone who looks respectable and grande dame and all the rest of it. Will your chauffeur object ?

PRIORESS : I shan't ask him.

BROWNE : But supposing he's not a socialist ?

PRIORESS : Well, I'm not. If I were a socialist I suppose my chauffeur would be here to meals and so on, instead of down in the village ; and he would be lecturing to us, not we—or rather you—to him.

BROWNE : Oh, not necessarily. There is still the aristocracy of intellect.

THE HOSTESS : I don't think you ought to ask Mrs. Christie to take you. She won't like it.

PRIORESS : I'm sure I shall love it. I like children.

A GOLDEN-HAIRED YOUTH : Prioress, dear, will you have some honey ?—I love honey, it reminds me of home.

PRIORESS : No, thank you, Mr. Rivers.

A POET (*with powder-blue eyes and black hair, and rather fresh complexion. He stands hands in pockets and shoulders up*) : People who love home always leave it. Do we love what we leave or leave what we love ? Clematis, tell me !

PRIORESS : Why do you call her Clematis ?

BLUE-EYED POET : Clematis is short for Travellers' Joy. She is Travellers' Joy because she likes to take it easy. That is the true traveller's joy.

A GIRL : And why is my mother the Prioress ? It doesn't account for me.

PRIORESS : Hush, dear, you mustn't drag in our private lives !

GIRL : I don't think I approve of this place. I shan't ask father for the week-end. I wonder what they say about us down in the village.

PRIORESS : Taylor could probably tell, but you mustn't ask him !

THE LECTURER (*a middle-aged man in spectacles*) : By the way, that reminds me—we must be more careful. You should remember that ignorant people don't understand, and are very easily shocked. But you Simple Life folk must be careful. Williams the farmer was dreadfully disturbed because he saw comrades of both sexes coming in to breakfast from the haystacks this morning. Of course I know that it is all right, but they—the country people—won't stand it. You must take care to go into different fields, comrades.

NINA (*seventeen year old girl*) : But I promised mother I wouldn't sleep out alone. I don't think it's safe. (*a pause*).

PRIORESS : My room is delightful now the jackdaw's nest is removed from the chimney and I have a fire. Better than any haystack.

HOSTESS : Talking of sleeping arrangements, could you, Clematis, go into the dormitory ? A lady who won't take a cubicle wants your room.

CLEMATIS : I can't sleep with other people about.

THE RECUMBENT YOUNG MAN : Fancy minding *whom* one sleeps with. I don't !

BROWNE : Beale even baths gregariously—sun baths on the roof of Trinity.

CLEMATIS : They wake me every time they turn over !

BEALE (*the recumbent young man, scornfully*) : What civilisation ! (*He stands up, starts, and holds up one of his feet*). Oh, dear !

CLEMATIS : What is the matter ?

BEALE : It's only the flints. My feet are rather cut. But the human body must accustom itself to these things.

PRIORESS : I'm afraid it won't do that till you get rid of it.

BEALE : Clematis—Browne says that Decker is a Jew. I don't think it's true ; but if he is, God made him one. Will you tell Browne that the sentiment is unworthy of a socialist and a democrat ? He says he's a Jew, because it's a cheap sneer at a man with a dark complexion whom he doesn't like.

CLEMATIS : He hasn't a dark complexion !

BEALE : Well, neither have Jews necessarily. But his hair's black.

CLEMATIS : That isn't his face.

DECKER (*the blue-eyed Poet*) : Don't mind me. Now I come to think of it, my profile is rather negroid.

CLEMATIS : But think of the blueness of your eyes—like gentians !

DECKER : Where do gentians grow ?

PRIORESS : In Switzerland.

DECKER (*shivering*) : Sounds chilly. Do flowers grow there ? There's somebody walking over my grave. Who is it ? And where ?

CLEMATIS : Well, it's not likely to be in Switzerland, if you're going to Smyrna, or wherever it is you are studying Sanscrit for.

DECKER : No. Come nearer to me, somebody. I'm cold. Will some comrade draw nearer to my side ?

BROWNE : You'd be cold in hell, Decker !

DECKER (*romantically*) : Isn't the sea blue to-day ? Sparkling like a gem—or like my blue eyes ! I like that Welsh sea. Jones says there are seven buried cities in the bay. At low water you see their halls and towers, and you hear their bells. Read the Mabinogion.

BROWNE : You are beastly well educated.

DECKER : I was at Oxford before I went to Cambridge, comrade !

BEALE : Decker's a poet, Browne. You must make allowances for the man. Now to me poetry is only spoilt prose. And as for pictures—I spent four hours in the National Gallery all by myself trying to find out what it was all for. And failing ! But I respect the art-sense in others.

BROWNE : Decker and Rivers talk poetry all day—but Decker talks it in his sleep too.

DECKER : It's the only time I can hear myself speak, when you are abed !—If you listen, you will find that my poetry is warmer and more exotic than that of Phoebus Apollo, whatever my physical temperature may be.

RIVERS : I wish you wouldn't call me Phoebus. (*He shakes back his golden mane*). I'm not as good-looking as all that, I hope. The Greek hierarchy were no models for a poet and a scholar. —I intend to settle down rather early.—I really must marry —only it seems so precipitate to decide on it before I've found the woman.

DECKER : What did I say ? Though a poet, you are cold ! I've been engaged twice already.

PRIORESS : Poor dear ; did they jilt you ?

CLEMATIS : You only ask people to marry you because you are in need of their friendship and companionship. You make a great demand on sympathy.

BROWNE : What a price to pay for it !

CLEMATIS : It *is* rather touching.

DECKER : Yes, isn't it ! I shall ask you if you talk to me like that.

CLEMATIS : No you won't, because——

DECKER : Because what ?

CLEMATIS : Because I shall never listen to your poems for long enough !

DECKER : You'll listen to them all right when they are better.

CLEMATIS : Yes, when they are better !—I say, I do like that about you.

DECKER : Like what ?

CLEMATIS : You stand ragging better than any man I've ever known. Over things you care about, too. It should carry you far.

DECKER : Or rather, it shouldn't hinder me from going far. Something else should carry me.—I think I shall do good work. I've done a lot of bad, I know, but I don't get drawn into movements—I do what I want, though only in an inferior degree.—I wonder what will become of me in ten years from now. Do you ever try to pierce forward and see ? Where shall we all be ten years to-day ?

PRIORESS : I shall be in heaven, my children.

RIVERS : I don't think you will, Prioreess. You don't keep good enough company.

BROWNE : I shall become a Labour Member, *via* the London School of Economics.

THE LONG-HAIRED YOUNG MAN WHO FIRST SPOKE : I am sure something big will come of this awakening Democracy. —England will lead the way in international fellowship. . . . We shall be freed from social restrictions. . . .

A COLONIAL LADY : We are already if we want to be. I am.

RIVERS (*as the value of this contribution dawns on him*) : I say, what fun !

DECKER : Phoebus was well brought up. He is impressed.

1ST YOUNG MAN : In ten years' time Phoebus will be a poet, or a professor——

DECKER : Or both.—Let's go through the lot. Where shall I be ? You notice, I interest myself.

RIVERS : Decker will eat his heart out in the consular service—he loves to be talked about and listened to, and he'll hate the English colony——

CLEMATIS : . . . And the women ? . . . Where shall we be ?

DECKER : Women don't count.—That is their tragedy—and our romance !—Shall we go for a nice long walk now, Clematis ?

CLEMATIS : I hate long walks.

DECKER : I know. So do I. That's why I asked you.

(*They go*).

1ST YOUNG MAN (*ardently, to the colonial lady*) : I feel that you could teach me a very great deal.—Will you ?

COLONIAL LADY : Not-to-day, friend.

PRIORESS (*to the hostess*) : I think unusual things may happen here. Don't you ?

HOSTESS : Yes.—Somebody kissed the back of my head last evening, and then said he thought I was someone else !

PRIORESS : I expect that was only an excuse.

HOSTESS : The house is not well lighted.

PRIORESS : It seems like an interlude before some great event. One might think that the plague raged in London, and this was our haven.

1ST YOUNG MAN.—Perhaps the Germans are coming—like in *The Englishman's Home*. (*Laughs*). I rather like the Germans.

GIRL : When our ten days are over, and we are back in town, the world will seem normal again . . . more's the pity !

RIVERS : And when ten years are over— —(*he shakes back his golden forelock*)— —That sea, comrades, is so calm, so blue—crocus-blue.—It should be the Aegean !



The Irish Ways

By J. F. MACCABE.

Gibbon considered that a complete system of good roads was indispensable to any civilised nation. No doubt he arrived at that conclusion, first, from his profound knowledge of Roman history and the immensely important part played in it by the Roman roads, and secondly, because he lived in the days when the turnpike road was nearing its zenith and the railway revolution was yet to come. The railway, for a long period, seemed to have relegated the roads to a permanently secondary place, but time has brought with it a revenge so complete that now the railways find their prosperity, and in some cases their existence, menaced by that channel of communication which had appeared to be obsolete.

Not only are the roads in any country a measure of the civilisation of the community, but the study of their development throws a sidelight on the history of the country. For example, Christianity travelled by road—the Roman roads. From Egypt to the Wall in Northumberland is a long journey, but along that great trunk road came the Evangel—by Alexandria, Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Tarsus, Ephesus, Athens, Brundisium, Naples, Rome, Lyons, Autun, Canterbury, London, St. Albans. As Mr. Belloc points out, because the communications into Sussex got into bad order, the whole county remained heathen a full century after its neighbours had been converted. The existence of the Pinsk Marshes and the bad state of repair into which the road between Durazzo and Constantinople was allowed to fall, made communication between West and East difficult, and from that difficulty grew the great schism. So the fate of both Continent and Country largely depends upon its communications, and the modern communication takes place more and more by the road.

The history of the Irish road can contain no chapter on the Roman road. The Romans came to Holyhead, but no further. If they had crossed the channel, all history would certainly have been different. In England the Roman stamp is heavily marked on the road system of the present day. The Roman engineer knew his work, and he built so solidly that much of his work remains standing to-day, and the effect of the Roman road on

the English nation throughout the intervening centuries is no less marked. All these things Ireland missed.

Whilst there are no Roman roads in Ireland, we are not without a road history of our own. The Four Masters describe the "Five Prime Roads." These appear to be contemporary with "Conn of the Hundred Battles"—A.D. 123. They radiate from Tara. The route of the first was westward by Lough Owel, Mullingar and, probably, to Longford. The second ran through Ardee, Dundalk, and on to Armagh. The third connected Tara with Dublin through Lusk, and going along Stoneybatter, crossed the Liffey by the Hurdle-Ford (now Whitworth Bridge). On the south side of the river, the road was divided, one branch running along the coast to Bray, whilst the second went through Tallaght, Naas, Gowran, and thence across Ossory to Cashel, this portion being known as the "Way of the Great Forest." The fourth highway joined the last-named near Naas, but soon branched off across the Curragh to Roscrea, possibly extending to Nenagh and Limerick. The last Prime Road ran south-west to the great Esker (gravel) ridge through Clonmacnoise to Galway. The selection of the route of this last road indicates a very high order of selective ability on the part of the ancient Irish road engineers. At best, their task must have been one of the greatest difficulty. In all countries, and at all times, two outstanding obstacles have beset the road maker—dense forest and marshy ground. Ireland until comparatively recently was covered with dense forests. These have gone, but the miles of bogland which mark their site remain as a sore trouble for the road maker. Modern constructional methods can overcome the bog difficulty, but many of the older roads must have been literally swallowed up. The Esker ridge affording a good chariot road, gave excellent communication with Galway, thus explaining the early prominence of that town.

The Four Masters mention thirty-seven other roads, but so far these cannot be traced. Much, however, may be expected from aerial reconnaissance and photographs. Historic remains invisible at ground level have again and again been detected from aeroplanes. The explanation is obvious, but the phenomenon is intensely interesting and suggestive of many morals, both direct and indirect.

The roads mentioned above represent a very considerable

mileage, though scanty in comparison with the Roman road system in England and Wales. It is clear, however, that in these early days the network of roads left out very large areas of the country. The whole of the north-west was untouched, and Cork was cut off altogether so far as road communications were concerned. The chiefs and kings must have had things their own way in the south and south-west.

Whilst the turn-pike road system was developing rapidly in England, Ireland also was not idle. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the journals of the Irish House of Commons are crowded with notices of road improvements in almost every part of the country. Whitefield, an English visitor, in 1738, was specially struck with the cheapness of food and the goodness of the roads. It is to be feared that the latter-day tourist would have a rather different story to tell. Later, in 1776, Mr. Arthur Young said that the roads had greatly improved and were as a whole superior to those in England. But the scraps of evidence that can be collected after the lapse of many years are often contradictory, or at least confused. The famous Giraldus Cambrensis—described as the first cross-channel correspondent—depicts the country as impossible to travel through; and, later, Spenser was of a like opinion. A contemporary writer in 1685 said that the woods and bogs saved the Irish from the English enemy, and that the former astutely recognised the value of an impassable country, and indeed preferred to build houses near bogs particularly dangerous to the stranger.

At a much later period, however, the Grand Juries were fully alive to the importance of good roads. They wielded the arm of local finance, and although necessarily heavy payers of county cess themselves, were anything but niggardly. The total amount raised in the counties and boroughs of Ireland during the year 1806 was over £500,000, nearly all of which was for road work and maintenance. This would correspond to a rate of about one shilling per statute acre, and having regard to the value of the sovereign at that period, the road policy of that time was marked by a generosity not, unfortunately, emulated in these later days.

In Ireland we have had neither the Romans, nor a Telford, nor even a Macadam. Yet the great Telford, that real if not lineal descendant of the Roman road engineers, approached us very closely. He and his road got to Holyhead. The great road from

London to that point, and so to Ireland, was finished in 1830—a calamitous coincidence with the serious beginning of the railway age. Thereafter Telford and his road schemes were considered obsolete. The highways were looked upon as being finally superseded by the iron road. It required the development of the motor to reveal this colossal blunder. Most Irishmen have crossed the Menai Straits. Telford's suspension bridge was always a thing of beauty, but it required the advent of the motor to restore its utility.

The public lost their heads over Stephenson's locomotives and trains. It is a poor consolation for us that they subsequently lost their money in the "railway mania" of the forties. Given a fair field, Telford, the post-Roman, would have reformed the British trunk roads. The attempt is now being made under difficulties which time has increased, and the people have not even the shadow of a Telford to guide them.

The history of the last century or thereabouts is a transport nightmare. The lost opportunities and the almost complete lack of vision are, indeed, infuriating. The British public sinned against not only the light, but also the report of a House of Commons Committee. The self-propelled vehicle is not a new thing, and actually preceded Stephenson's railway. One Richard Trevithick produced workable steam road motors in 1802. In 1824 he ran them as stage coaches between Cheltenham and Gloucester with regularity and at quite respectable speeds. It was on these that the Committee referred to reported favourably. But the venture was killed by prohibitive tolls and public opposition, which culminated in the atrocious "red flag" Act of 1865. The combination of Trevithick and Telford would have changed the history of the whole world, or at least would have accelerated its progress. Those people, in the high, low, and middle places, who are now trying to drive the motor lorry from the roads should heed this warning. It is, of course, in the last degree unlikely that they will.

The London-Holyhead road was Roman in its conception, and, incidentally, a great part of it was already made by Roman hands. It was designed as a "through" road. Telford's vision was the linking of two capitals. Possibly the younger Pitt, who had carried the Union, looked to efficient transport as the only method of making the Union a reality. Reality or phantasm, that Union lasted quite a length of time. If the transport problem

on our side of the Channel had been addressed with the same thoroughness, history might have been written differently, but that is speculative, as are also the events yet to come, if and when modern transport is allowed full development. Transport is a factor which in different stages of developments produces vastly different results. That "all things flow" is an old saying, but it does not connote that things always flow in the same way, or even in the same direction. Highly-developed but one-sided and uncoordinated transport has, after a century, given us hideous towns, unutterable slums, a social problem that cries to Heaven for remedy—the time for vengeance is not yet, and may be avoided—and a depopulated country-side. Transport is the key to unlock every one of these and similar problems.

Here in Ireland, as I have said, we had neither the Romans nor their roads. The canal and the railways came to us, by way of overflow, from England, and, such as they are, we have to take them and make the best of them. It would be well if we could largely shift their position, but this cannot possibly be done. A policy of road, rail, and canal traffic co-ordination is obviously desirable, but extremely difficult to work out in practice. People with real experience dread official control. It produces results much worse than any dead hand. In south-eastern Europe a terrible belief is held. It relates to a "thing" which is neither a human being nor a conventional, and therefore respectable, ghost. It is in between the two—an intermediate "for which there is no name." These horrors are commonly spoken of as "vampires," but a brilliant Irish writer coined the term "un-dead." It aptly describes the official who has been allowed to go wrong, and is permitted to blow with his semi-cold breath on healthy growing organisms. The organism dies, and is interred in a series of regulations and many forms. And the funeral is not merely highly inconvenient to the public, but appallingly expensive as well.

The whole world is aghast at the cost of the Great War. If the official element had been eliminated from it, and hostilities let out by contract, the War Debts would have been quite manageable. Indemnities would also have been promptly collected. It is only when officials are allowed to stray beyond their proper sphere that mischief is done. There have been great officials who were yet public benefactors in a very real sense. But these few great men all possess the same trait—a thorough knowledge of the

principles and technic of their work, coupled with a grim determination that such knowledge must always be their servant and never their master. It is hard to conceive a really great official who had neither Irish blood, or, at least, an Irish wife. A touch of the rebel, supplied from some source, is essential to an official who would become truly great. It is difficult to say whether an aristocrat or a rebel is the better loved in the real Ireland—that ever-changing, protean, entity that is as real as it is elusive—and, at times, exasperating. O'Connell's boast that he could drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament was not only a sober statement of his legal abilities, but also a proper warrant for holding the position of an Irish leader.

Central administration in roads should, anywhere, be approached with caution. In Ireland such administration is not indigenous, as the reading of our history shows. The unit of road administration for a very long time has been the county. The Local Government Act of 1898 draws a very sharp distinction between the main road and the district road. The individual ratepayer in a given locality stood to win financially according as a greater number of miles of his local roads appeared under the schedule of main roads. But the Act, with consummate wisdom, omitted to define a main road, and cross-reference to previous legislation was almost equally barren. So the County Councils were left with a free hand, and were not hampered by cast-iron definitions, and the train of consequent outrages on common sense. Further, a scheme once made could be appealed against. The arguments on appeal never failed to be illuminating. At any rate, progress was made per separate unit, and the task of co-operation commenced automatically. If heavy traffic passed over a road, or roads, from county to county, no difficulty was ever experienced in getting both County Councils to schedule (though not simultaneously) the roads in question as being main roads. Most gratifying grumbling arose from time to time to the effect that stranger traffic was wearing out the home roads, and pointed suggestions made that the strangers should be made to pay. Here were the germs of national "through" roads, paid for out of a provincial if not a national rate. Under Sir Henry Robinson, this policy was growing with a steady acceleration. As he knew *all* the roads quite as well, if not rather better than the average County Surveyor knew his own

county, the general policy pursued could not fail to be right. But then came the all-arresting Great War, and after that the Irish troubles, from which we have not yet recovered. Numbers of bridges were destroyed in our own home-made echo of the European strife, but no incident of a blind corner being removed as a lasting benefit to peaceful travellers has been reported. Perhaps if the Irish hostilities had gone on long enough, the necessity born of strife would have lead to radical road improvement. The Romans were great soldiers as well as engineers and road administrators. They built their roads straight, and often raised them over the level of the surrounding country. Their primary object was the avoidance of ambush. No country, ancient or modern, could pretend to teach Ireland anything about the theory and practice of an ambush.

The unnatural divorce between town and country is really the result of transport methods so uncoordinated as to be defective. These things cannot be remedied at a stroke, but that they some time will be there is no doubt. A public grown accustomed to the char-a-banc and the motor-bus will not tolerate what used to pass as efficient transport. Nor will the hard-working public which in Dublin discovered—and that by its own action—Portmarnock as a Sunday refuge from Dublin, be content to live indefinitely in slums, or even in dreary terraces, however closely these adhere to the letter of the soul-destroying building by-law code. A number of things are being found out in these latter days. Some day, and that soon, the public, generally inarticulate, will become vocal over traffic congestion in the towns. A glaring example of this may be seen in the approaches to the great Port of Dublin. What should be easy to get to is congested and difficult of access. A suggestion to widen these approaches would be negatived on the ground of expense. That sort of story will not be listened to much longer. Site value depends upon position, and the value of position, in turn, depends upon the surrounding area and its circumstances. In other words, site value is not intrinsic. Decay follows congestion, and that is the reason why in the past many towns have fallen from a high estate to mediocrity and even nothingness. The fact is that vigorous town clearances to relieve congestion have always been followed by an increase of wealth. What was cleared away was not real wealth, however plausible was the outward semblance.

Ireland has plenty of water-ways, both natural and artificial. Their existence has been forgotten, or at least partly ignored, for many years. If it be borne in mind that much merchandise does not call for speed in transit, many heavy burdens could be shifted from the road to the canals. And our navigable rivers are many in number—a fact lost sight of, particularly in these days when the Shannon has become notorious. But it is our roads which demand particular attention, both as to policy and actual reconstruction. Here the too ardent reformer becomes a danger. Great speedway with glass-like surfaces leaping from point to point look well—on paper. But who would care to cross one of these roads with high-speed traffic going both ways? Would gates and level crossings be necessary? Much may be done by the funding of the tax on motors. This tax is, by the way, the lineal descendant of the old toll, though it is levied without visible turn-pikes. And the horse must not be forgotten. The motor-car become a legal entity thirty years ago, and ever since the passing of the horse has been prophesied with certainty. If the horse was somewhat in eclipse for a period, he has now come to his own, and that even in the towns. And there is hunting, which is a much greater asset in Ireland than any tourist traffic, as well as being much more to our Irish taste. Our road surfaces must be made safe for horses. The more humane and intelligent view that is now being taken of our cattle trade will probably result in the practical abolition of driving cattle and sheep along highways. They will be carried in motor lorries instead. But the roads must be suitable for them as well as the horse, and the sooner the motor interests realise this plain fact, the sooner will necessary road improvements be carried out in the interests of all, and not merely of any one section of users of the highways.



The New Poet Speaks Out

You,
who have been spoon-fed
on the devastating drivel written by Tennyson
and that half-wit Wordsworth
(who, if he knew anything,
certainly knew nothing about the worth of words)
cannot be expected to appreciate
the New Verse.

You have not, you see,
read Freud or Jung,
and you do not know very much
about complexes and inhibitions;
neither are your emotions
vortical.

You may have observed
a sunset
and even tried to write a sonnet about it,
but not being post-impressionist
you have not noticed
how strikingly it resembles
a poached egg.

The New Verse
is beyond you
because
your thoughts are never yellow
nor do your ideas take the shape of
a parallelogram.

Besides, you do not realise
how clever it is
to chop up lines
like this,
and you have not learnt
that the first law of Poetry is,
"Thou shalt not commit a rhyme!"

What is wrong with you
is
that you *will* persist in reading
nursery poets
such as
Keats
and (awful thought !)
Yeats,
poor simpering rhymers on whom
the laurels gathered on the New Parnassus will never
sit well.

You should read my
"Ode on a Decaying Cabbage,"
it certainly is
the goods.

But then you would not appreciate it,
you have never learnt
(not being a Vorticist Poet)
that only the Ugly is Beautiful,
nor has it ever occurred to you
that Poetry has a scientific geometric basis.

You do not know
how much you are missing ;
I am indeed sorry for you,
you poor Victorian relic !

M. J. MACMANUS.



The Supremacy of Music

By T. G. K.

Music is the only art that entirely rapturizes me. This is the standpoint from which this article is written. Surveying the complete field of art, I suggest that it may be divided into two categories—art that illuminates the surface of life, and art that illuminates the substratum of life. The only art that fundamentally, vitally and finally combines these two divergent and separate qualities is music. Music out-speaks and out-lives humanity in every respect. It is always calling ahead. Always insinuating itself into the unpredictable adventure. The other arts rest secure on a basis of human achievement that can be computed. Music is out in the deep and can only seize on such intangible things as rhythm and pulsation for material manifestation. Popularly music is known as isolated melody, the thing that kills its inmost being. Much as I like isolated melody, I know it cripples and confines aspiration. It should release aspiration. Any musician will acknowledge that the only solid basis of music is counterpoint, the weaving together of melody. The best music is that which calls to the blind things of the mind, the dumb things of the heart. Accepted music is that in which the passion of the mind is fused in the fury of feeling.

Now in writing about these matters we must always remember that words are but dim candle lights that gutter out in the heavy darkness of our ignorance. In their shrinking and elusiveness they mock at our feeble ideas. But for the sake of interchanging thought we may assume that any activities that can be traced or recorded in words belong to the surface of life. The rest, the overmastering part of nature, is the substratum that finds no words for its expression. Occasionally it embodies itself in a deed, incomprehensible or epoch-making. The arts of painting, sculpture, literature, dance, invade its territory at haphazard, and then pause aghast shuddering at their temerity. And the word substratum itself only dimly shadows what I suggest here. It is necessary to convey an impression of something that alike encompasses and overrules, that is the essence of hidden motives, that cannot be directly expressed, but requires trans-valuation into the symbolism of sensuous images. And here the human mind must halt. For it is face to

face with cosmic blasphemy. The imponderable subscribes to no image of itself set up in the region of time and space and matter.

And though music, as I have said, combines the characteristics of these two divergent qualities, it is essentially the art of the substratum. No mortal ever grasped an atom of parcelled-out nature the better for music. It is supremely the spirit behind phenomena, the underlying and supporting basis of outward creation. But it also seizes and interprets the surface. And when it functions on the surface, coping with externality in the region ruled by words, it is lordly enough to reject their accepted methods. It uses sound waves, it is true, but not in the clipped and truncated fashion of words. But with the invading and victorious might of a power that existed even before the beginning that was the word.

Think for a moment of the procession of the European arts. Greek sculpture gave us sinless objectivity, radiant and illuminated. The idea of creation cold and noble in the mind of the creator, put forth a little way into line and form to see that it was good. And good means vitality. The core is aflame. And yet to outward apprehension all is cold. Then suddenly the miracle of art, "And behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." This is the fundamental mystery of Sculpture. The icy form with the glowing heart. Essence and creation at one with themselves. A living fire that conceals itself and is only revealed to the eyes of the elect.

Italian painting shows us the idea of creation thrust a little deeper into the world of sense. The white serenity of marble has now become impregnated with a wider range of incarnation. To the perfection of line and form we get added the lure of perspective, a more delicate sense, perhaps, of line and form, and, above all, the gorgeous, passionate pulse of colour. The pure idea of creation has taken that unaccountable twist or turn—perhaps designed, perhaps unforeseen—that the whole world joins in ascribing to the manifold phenomena denoted by the word sin. Hereafter line and form and colour in themselves will be insufficient to satisfy the craving of the unrolling spirit. Shakespeare typifies the uplifting of these elements through the mind to a more rarified atmosphere. To think of a statue or picture—to recall it, to reproduce it in mental terms—is a more subtle thing than to see it. In other words, literature gives us the

synthesis of sculpture and painting in the upward urge of spirit through matter, with the creative idea of redemption as its leading motive. It was only natural now that modern music—which typifies the redeemed spirit—should follow. And so we come to John Sebastian Bach, the fountain source of this art. The creative idea has conquered. It is now back to the purity of Greek sculpture, but with the added radiance and power of sin expressed, conquered and redeemed. Bach gives us the architectonics of the invading spirit marching forth in its mighty raptures to the possession of the conquered worlds of sense and matter. Our modern composers have merely added a memory of its primal rapture when chaos wakened into sinless creation. Comparatively it is a small thing. But for actual needs a triumph. For who can fail to be enthralled when the music reminds us of an era prior to the primacy of matter, when, in the flux and fusion of becoming, the fiery nebulae were pining for form and tenure, and when, at its accomplishment, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy”?



The Wit and Fantasy of Donne

By R. L. MÉGROZ.

John Donne's poetic character has a special appeal for the present age surpassing that of his Elizabethan predecessors, and the reason for this bond of particular sympathy is probably to be found in his combination of intellectual dissatisfaction and emotional fervour. The present age, as revealed by its literature, is vital enough, hot with desire for the unattainable, but full of doubts, troubled with self-disgust. It is both self-conscious and emotional, rich in the poetry of escape and also rich in satire.

There is, then, something about the poetry of Donne, revolting from the cheerful acceptance of the Renaissance, very much akin to the spirit of post-Victorian poetry. "The silken folds of fashion," says Mr. l'Anson Faussett, in his monograph on Donne, "which charmed the rather exotic taste of contemporary poets, irked him as the iron of naked fetters. Neither tradition nor reputation cowed the self-sufficiency of one who, some years later, was to dismiss three princes of the classical manner in such scornful parody as this :—

Here sleep's house by famous Ariosto,
By silver-tongued Ovid and many moe—
Perhaps by golden-mouthed Spenser too, pardie—
Which builded was some dozen stories high,
I had repair'd, but that it was so rotten,
As sleep awaked by rats from thence was gotten.

But for the most part he was to disdain 'these wits that say nothing' by the decisive method of denying in his own work all their cherished values."

Donne's peculiarity, arising, as we have said, from energy of intellect combined with energy of emotion (and tintured by temperamental disharmony and moroseness), is shown most obviously by the proportion of satire in his work. He was a satirical preacher as well as a satirical poet. His intellect probed the weaknesses of institutions and customs, men and manners, not so much to reform them as to reform himself. But his rich emotional nature demanded satisfaction, and so we find him clothing thought in poetic fantasy that was strange to his contemporaries. Donne, however, was essentially a poet, not a

logician, and his intellect is most happily employed in the application of wit to experience. It was the marriage of wit to dream which altered the hue of his fantasy, producing a poetry which, at its best, is mystical rather than metaphysical. In "The Ecstasy," one of his finest poems, he writes :—

Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm, which thence did spring,
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string,

which is the sort of thing that has been described as " metaphysical poetry." The wit employed is obvious, but it is buried, so to speak, in the glow of a dream. The ardour of the poet has transformed the logical and metaphysical element into mystical vision. The words seem to be spoken in a husky voice trembling with passion; the soul of the poet is shining with humility before the splendour of love.

We may now take another fine poetic conceit, where the emotional tension is less, and it will be found that the mystical element has vanished. The following image from a sonnet of Shakespeare, is sufficiently poetic—that is to say, emotional enough to convince us of its validity, but it is not passionate :—

Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime.

Many other images, apparently more exalted than a looking-glass, might have served the poet's purpose equally well; but, having chosen this, he works it out logically, and richly decorates it. Such an example, however, let us observe parenthetically, is not characteristic of all the sonnets, which often reach the highest pitch of intensity. Here the choice of the image is a flash of wit. But in Donne's " Ecstasy," although there is more complexity in the conceit, it is carried off by passion into a mystical simplicity. It will not be wasting space to quote the first part of the poem :—

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swell'd up to rest
The violet's declining head,
Sate we, on one another's breast.

Our hands were firmly cemented
 By a fast balm which thence did spring,
 Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
 Our eyes upon one double string.

So to engraft our hands as yet
 Was all our means to make us one,
 And pictures in our eyes to get
 Was all our propagation.

As 'twixt two equal armies Fate
 Suspends uncertain victory,
 Our souls (which, to advance their state,
 Were gone out) hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
 We like sepulchral statues lay ;
 All day the same our postures were,
 And we said nothing all the day.

A characteristic of imagery employed by the mystic and by the creator of poetry such as this can be observed more easily in the perfect "Valediction forbidding Mourning." It is the employment of humble workaday images which, without the tension of overpowering emotional conviction, would remain merely quaint, as do indeed most such "metaphysical" images. In Donne's own work will be found plenty of examples of merely quaint imagery, conceits which interest the mind by unexpectedness, but which do not seem to mean more than the words say, do not echo in the memory, or gather about themselves an aura of associations. Here, for example, are the first two stanzas of "Love's Diet." Carew never wrote anything more affected and artificial :—

To what a cumbersome unwieldiness
 And burthenous corpulency my love had grown,
 But that I did, to make it less,
 And keep it in proportion,
 Give it a diet, made it feed upon
 That which Love worst endures, discretion.

Above one sigh a day I allowed him not,
 Of which my fortune and my faults had part ;
 And if sometimes by stealth he got
 A she sigh from my mistress' heart,
 And thought to feast on that, I let him see
 'Twas neither very sound, nor meant for me.

But see what Donne can make with a pair of compasses for metaphor when he writes with fervour. Here are the last five stanzas of the "Valediction forbidding Mourning":—

But we, by a love so far refined
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefor, which are one,
Though I must go, indure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two ;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when th' other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like the other foot, obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

Donne's poetic energy turned religion as well as love into a mystical theme, transforming the deliberate wit of the images as it is transformed in the erotic verse. So he not only writes "Divine Poems," but pours into sermons a fiery energy which occasionally makes the rumbling and sonorous prose a vehicle of poetry. On such occasions the words of the penitent poet pierce like flame the smoke of involved argument and far-fetched conceit. On imperfect prayers he says:—

But when we consider with a religious seriousness the manifold weaknesses of the strongest devotions in time of prayer, it is a sad consideration. I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in, and invite God and his Angels, thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door ; I talk on, in the same posture of praying ; eyes lifted up ; knees bowed down ; as though I prayed to God ; and, if God, or his Angels should ask me, when I thought last of God in that prayer, I cannot tell : Sometimes I find that I had forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory of

yesterday's pleasures, a fear of to-morrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a light in mine eye, an any thing, a nothing, a fancy, a Chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer. So certainly is there nothing, nothing in spiritual things, perfect in this world.

From a consideration of the philosophy of imperfection he breaks into a passage of eloquent illustration, which concludes, retaining the wit, with the concrete imagery and the rhythm of poetry :—

The world is a great Volume, and man the Index of that Book ; Even in the body of man, you may turn to the whole world : This body is an Illustration of all Nature ; God's recapitulation of all that he had said before, in his *Fiat lux*, and *Fiat firmamentum*, and in all the rest, said or done, in all the six days. Propose this body to thy consideration in the highest exaltation thereof ; as it is in the *Temple of the Holy Ghost* : Nay, not in a Metaphor, or comparison of a Temple or any other similtudinary thing, but as it was really and truly the very body of God, in the person of Christ, and yet this body must wither, must decay, must languish, must perish. When *Goliath* had armed and fortified this body, And *Jezebel* had painted and perfumed this body, And *Dives* had pampered and larded this body, As God said to *Ezekiel*, when he brought him to the *dry bones*, *Fili hominis*, *Sonne of Man*, dost thou think these bones can live ? They said in their hearts to all the world, Can these bodies die ? And they are dead. *Jezebel's* dust is not Amber, nor *Goliath's* dust *Terra sigillata*, Medicinal ; nor does the Serpent, whose meat they are both, find any better relish in *Dives' dust*, than in *Lazarus*.

If the reader desires to possess a volume of poetry in prose he might do worse than obtain the book of selected passages from the "Sermons," by Logan Pearsall Smith, from which the above quotations are taken. A subject like "Eternal Damnation" evokes all the passion and poetry in Donne, and the prose passage following "That God should let my soul fall out of his hand, into the bottomless pit" is lurid with sombre fantasy, intricate with inwoven conceits, loud with organ-like contrapuntal music rolling thunderously from high to low, from low to high along the labyrinthine galleries of the soul.



More of Connemara

By PATRICK KELLY.

A careful study of an illustrated Guide Book, entitled "Connemara Highlands," and issued by English publishers, evidently many years ago, has forced me to the conclusion that such books should not be written at all—at least so far as Connemara is concerned—by those who are usually given the job of writing them.

The style of this particular book aims at the grandiose, which is fatal; it contains such words as "precipitous" and "bold" so frequently that one begins to hate them; and it contains a startling tale of the incredibly damnable superstition of the "pisantry." The original of this tale, which has to do with scenery (the version given in the book is by the Rev. Cæsar Otway), is a very fine piece of imaginative work, and the Rev. Cæsar Otway in retelling it made a sorry mess of the business.

"We cross the stream . . . obtaining a *good view* of the lake."

Really this is very bad for the enlightened author of a Guide Book. He must have known nothing whatever about the life, meaning, or mystery of a lake. It would seem almost profane to talk of a "good view" of Lough Ina or its sister lake, Derryclare. But perhaps the man wasn't enlightened at all. Probably he was an ordinary mild, middle-class Englishman, elderly, and with spectacles. If he were a painter, one wonders after what manner he would paint Lough Ina. Hardly in the manner of Mr. Charles Lamb.

The scenery of Connemara is almost unique. Perhaps in parts of Donegal there is the same touch of elusive magic, but surely nowhere else in Ireland. It is noticeable that the people who write of "beauty spots" of Connemara confine their efforts to such places as Kylemore and Ballinahinch. This is because they are easy subjects: they are in a sense familiar, and besides one may "draw a red herring" across the trail in either place; there is a story of Ballinahinch and a story of Kylemore. . . . Ballinahinch and Kylemore are really exotic: you may match them in Wicklow and in the South. But a true piece of the actual Connemara cannot be matched outside of Connemara.

Sometimes I feel very glad that I do not own a motor-car—or even a Ford car, which, I understand, is a democratic conveyance and may not park with the best motor society. . . .

Anyhow, if I had a motor-car, I'd drive slowly through the village of Oughterard, a little before sunset, on a clear, calm summer evening, when the smell of the bog was rising out on the world, and back and over I'd go, three miles east and three miles west, and ten times I'd do it—until the Civic Guard would arrest me as a man not quite right in his mind. . . . And all the tourists' hand-books tell you of Oughterard is that it is a rather pretty village on the main road from Galway to Clifden, and close to Lough Corrib, and that there are some "interesting remains" in its neighbourhood. Oughterard, like many, many places in Connemara, is unknown to the tourists: the intimate charm of it has escaped them.

Again—if I had a motor-car—I'd seek out a driver with the irresponsible name of McGrath, and at twelve o'clock on a summer day, and a drift of thin rain coming down on the wind from the mountains, and the mountains themselves gone in the thick mist—I'd set out from Mongan's, in Carna, and me sitting beside McGrath and my arms folded, and up the falling road we'd go, and past the long-lost forest of Knockboy, and over Borlineen Bridge, and over the two bridges of Gowla, and round the leaning bends of Bunnahown, and past the lake of the lilies, and past Luragan lake, and by the cross-roads where the giants piled the stones a million years ago, and up the rise and through Glanturkeen, and out by the high waters, and down and past the hidden well of Goroman, and over the bridge of the twin lakes, and sharply to the right and down by the lake of Recess, and sharply to the left by the railway station, and over the red road that goes away to Kylemore and past Derryclare, and down—slowly down—to the bridge of Ina. And never during that great ride would I give voice to a single thought. Only now and again, as we swung round the bends and raced on the levels, and the intoxication of movement through the thin and fast-moving summer rain overmastered and stole my sense and filled my blood with its wildness, would I utter in the tone of a Volmar ordering a sudden and terrible advance, the cabalistic words:—

"Drive on, McGrath!"

Perhaps phantoms in a thousand years from now will indulge in the mad joy of such a race, and at the hour of midnight, under the moon, on a road in Connemara. . . . But where will be the bridges then?

And again—if I had a motor-car—I'd rise out of Clifden at

dawn of day in the month of June, and follow the road to Galway. And where in all Ireland is there another such road? But the road itself wouldn't lure me as much as the early morning and the sensation—strange and almost sadly sweet, because it is half longing—of following in the wake of the emigrants. No man may wholly explain away this sensation. The little white clouds against the blue ground of eastern sky and just above the solemn hills, have something to do with it. Perhaps it is they who really call away the people.

Says the Guide Book: "A charming car trip may be made from Recess to the head of Cashel Bay. To enjoy it we follow the main road to Clifden for about a mile, and then turn south. After driving for some four miles further with the ever-increasing scent of ozone in our nostrils, we reach our destination"—and finally, of course, we "make the ascent" of Cashel Hill.

What a terrible drive, and in what terrible language! "The ever-increasing scent of ozone." . . . The man missed everything but the tide. What a pity he didn't miss that too.

Cashel, where Stephen Flaherty lived and lilted, is one of the wonder places of Connemara, and the road from Recess to Cashel has a something in it and around it that no man will ever see and understand except he be kin of the poets. Cashel is the retreat of the little bushes: long ago they left the dark lost spaces and went to Cashel to live out their lives in the joy of the sun and for the happiness of you and me. In Cashel, in its highest perfection, is the marvellous and elusive grey-green colouring noticeable occasionally in Connemara but seemingly untranslatable; that is to say, no artist as yet has actually given it on his canvas. Seen at noonday in summer, in a thin, fine rain, and with the hills lost in the heavier mist, the lower ground of Cashel is an exquisite grey-green; and so sure is this grey-green, so dominant and so restful, so rich and so alluring, that the wonder of it holds the eyes as does the silver of the moon on running water. The very stones in its midst seem to lose their bulk, to sink down and subdue their ugliness, as if they, too, wished to pay homage to its loveliness. Only a particularly impudent variety of fern stands out against it.

If the history of Ireland remains to be written, as we are told by those who understand such matters, then we may say confidently that a true account of the beauty of Connemara has never been penned. But we may say also that it cannot be done in the

ordinary way ; Connemara resists and resents the Guide Book. It may be done in *impressions*, rapid and certain ; and all such impressions may be collected in a book. Such a book—the work of many and widely different people, artists and writers—would be very well worth reading.

I understand that there is a body called the Tourist Development Association, which has its headquarters in Dublin, and has to do with the entire tourist business of Southern Ireland. It is quite right, of course, to seek to develop the tourists—in body and mind—but it would not be quite right to proceed on the old worn lines of the Congested Districts Board when that estimable Department sought to develop the entire West out of existence. . . . Somehow all such associations as the T. D. A. seem to lack originality. They do not appear to take exact measure of the actual ground upon which they must work. Connemara as a playground has great possibilities, but hardly at the moment has it probabilities. “ Is it possible to cross the Alps ? ” asked General Bonaparte. “ Well—yes,” said the officer of engineers. “ Good,” said the general ; “ I’ll cross them.” It is possible to do wonderful things with Connemara, but——

Connemara, be it said in all seriousness, is under the blight, ban and curse of the terrible *They*. *They* is a negative pronoun of cold, deliberate and diabolical villiany. It has no existence save in actual sound and in the printed letters. It cannot be driven into a corner or into a soft bog and compelled “ to stay put.” It has not even the decency of a phantom or a mirage. Such things have a certain substantial existence: *They* has none at all.

“ Why isn’t there a golf course back on the sands of Gurteen ? ”

“ How do I know ? Sure *they* won’t do a single thing for Connemara.”

“ Isn’t it a wonder there isn’t a little summer town somewhere about here ? ”

“ Don’t be talking, man, dear, *they* are no good at all ; *they* never do anything for us.”

When somebody despises and ignores the bad influence of the mysterious *They* to such an extent as to translate the word freely and forcibly into *We* or *I*—then, and maybe not till then, will there be a change in the destiny of Connemara.

We may not cast far into the future. One may learn this from Napoleon. Still it may be possible to speculate accurately from certain data, and so touch the border line of prophecy.

Granted this much, and Connemara, seen through the telescope of the imagination, becomes the land of small "summer" houses—that is to say, cottages—in certain select areas, derelict in winter and spring, and tenanted in summer and autumn. . . . And why not? The great tourist hotels are for the millionaire fishers. A lady with a complete knowledge of the fisheries of Connemara and of the arithmetic of fishing, if not of its poetry, said recently: "You cannot fish here under *two pounds* a day." Fish only—nothing else included in the charge. Outside the fishers, and distinct and apart from the fishers, are the "flying tourists"—people who dash in on fast motors and "do" Connemara, and then dash out and are heard of no more. The fishers are the aristocrats of the tourist tribe: the "doers" are not; between the two there is a gap, and this gap remains to be filled. Cottage houses "without upstairs or downstairs," and furnished as cottage houses should be furnished, would take the place of hotels for the people who would fill the gap between the fishers and the casual or flying tourists.

Connemara is a place in which to live and rest for a time in the long days. One cannot *live* in a tourist hotel, and certainly one cannot rest there, for in order to rest one must begin by living. Tourist hotels are full of fishing tackle and the jargon of fishing. If, say, a bookman appeared in a tourist hotel in Connemara, the fishers would probably assassinate him. They become temporarily insane on the subject of fishing, and anyone under the same roof as themselves and not mad in the same manner as they, however mad he might be otherwise, would run a big risk of being expelled from existence. Therefore the great tourist hotels are not suitable for those who wish to live and rest during whatever leisure time they may have; nothing remains for such people but the quiet of the cottage house.

But cottage houses that tourists might take by the month or by the season do not exist in Connemara. (The Congested Districts Board forgot to build them). And if you ask some of the people of Connemara why this is so, you will get the inevitable answer that there seems to be no answering: "Oh! damn the bit will *they* do for us at all." I do not know if the building of such cottages should be a special concern of Government, if it is part of the programme of the T. D. A., or if the business be really within the scope of private enterprise; but anyone who knows Connemara well must at once conclude that those cottages,

even if they be but suburban extensions of the magic city of Skyrá, will in time come into existence—or into fashion—and be tenanted by quiet people—or quiet phantoms—who will live the quiet and irresponsible life of Connemara, and who, having lived it once, will have no dearer wish in life than to live it again and yet over again. The Duke of Wellington, on seeing Waterloo for the first time, exclaimed in the sublime and delicately poetic language of which he had a store: "I don't care a tinker's damn what anyone says: this damn field is the correct place for a great battle." And so it was. And, as we all know, the great battle came to pass. Without in the least seeking to imitate the poetry of Wellington, one may say plainly: "This Connemara is the true place for small houses wherein tired folk may live after the manner of those delightful people who are native here, and who are so full of fun that it would be well for us all if we could imitate them."

Now when anyone talks of tourist development in connection with the West of Ireland, there is always a certain amount of cautious reserve in answering on the side of the good and thoughtful listener. And this for the excellent reason that a certain famous race meeting of the said West of Ireland was the occasion of rather strong comment not so very long ago. The comment had nothing to do with the actual racing but with the high charges that were made by hotels and boarding houses during the time of the meeting. Even the Dublin bookmakers, sportsmen to a man and generous as the most generous of the fraternity, were uneasy over the matter, and said so frankly. All this is public knowledge, and there is no scandal whatever in mentioning it. It is said for the sake of the arithmetic of business. And as a warning . . . But perhaps the warning is not necessary at present.

One shudders to think what would happen if a miraculous visitation took place in Ireland. The vicinity of the scene would at once become a ground of commercial intrigue unless the forces of Government were used to prevent it. I say this without apology or qualification of any sort, but with all reverence for miraculous happenings and for every mysterious design of the Infinite.

Galway City has been spoken of as a great future transatlantic port. So has Blacksod Bay, in Mayo. A beginning has been made in the matter. Galway has been examined by a committee or a deputation or a commission, with a view, no doubt, to the making of a map of its possibilities.

Galway is an interesting place. It is the city of good manners and pretty girls. In these two particulars it is alone in Ireland : it has no rival. Should it ever become a port of call for the American mail steamers, the beauty specialists of New York will grow amazing rich as a result of the efforts of American society women to counterfeit the complexions of the belles of old Galway. The thing cannot be done, I admit ; for that (in colour) which costs nothing cannot be imitated successfully in that which costs something. But whether or no, the Americans will try.

Hidden away in Connemara, on the coast between Cashel and Roundstone, there is a natural harbour—a secret harbour, in fact—associated with one Captain Jervis (or Gervais), an Englishman who, some fifty years ago, came to the district and set up works for the clearing of the harbour and the building of a breakwater. He said to a man still living in the locality : “ When I have finished with this harbour it will hold the whole British Navy.” However the captain finished nothing : he was stopped (so the people say) by the then owners of the Ballinahinch Estate.

What the exact plan, purpose or idea of this man was, is not known. Certainly the particular inlet of the Atlantic which so fixed his attention is said by boatmen to be a perfect harbour. It may be indeed that in the future—near or distant—some man skilled in the mysteries of anchorage will survey the little bay and its shores, which so interested the English captain half a century ago, and learn by deduction the object of his unsuccessful enterprise. It was scarcely a quixotic notion : the English are highly skilled in the lore of waters, if not in the lore of fairies, as we are, and as Paoli used to say, are truly a nation of shopkeepers.

The land which borders this secret bay is called Rossroe. Who knows but Rossroe in good time may be the complement of Rosslare? . . . Of course it is just possible that Captain Gervais (or Jervis) was really in quest of Spanish treasure. Or for that matter he may have had piratical mania, with a plan for overhauling vessels on the trade routes. If so, the bog in the vicinity of Rossroe would be a suitable place for burying his treasure.

What a pity it is that Synge, who knew so much—and so little—of the unfortunate and much misjudged Melia of Calla, did not know of the potential pirate of Rossroe. . . . But sure maybe the tale was one for Stephenson or George Bermingham. Synge dealt in cruder stuff.

Book Reviews

THE ORTHODOXY OF EVOLUTION.

"EVOLUTION." By J. Graham Kerr, F.R.S., Regius Professor of Zoology in the University of Glasgow. (Macmillan, London, 1926. Pp. 275. Figs. 53. 12s. net).

The main fact of the evolution of the Animal Kingdom is definitely established and is accepted by most educated people, apart from those who by temperament or training, refuse to acknowledge human reason to be the judge of material things.

Now, when a doctrine becomes widely accepted its foundations are apt to be taken for granted, and for this reason it is well to have occasional seasons of critical reflection when the arguments of the past may be reconsidered in the light of later discoveries or fashions of thought.

Interest in evolutionary biology has been recently stimulated by the trial in Dayton, Tennessee, of a school teacher on a charge of having taught "that man descended from a lower order of animals, in violation of a State statute forbidding such teaching." The event was made memorable by the revival of an old controversy between an aspect of science and an aspect of religion as to the position of the Authorised Version of the Bible among scientific text-books.

The arguments in support of the theory of evolution were submitted to a vigorous criticism, and, as a result, popular interest in the subject increased rapidly, many books and review articles appeared, and an open debate in London last September (1925) between Mr. G. M. Price, and Mr. J. McCabe filled the Queen's Hall.

The appearance of Professor Graham Kerr's "sketch of evolution" is, therefore, most opportune. Unlike many of its contemporaries it is written throughout in a sober and restrained form that carries conviction. The author does not traffic in marvels; there is no account of rejuvenation, of sex transformation (beyond the observations of Crew), Tennessee is not mentioned, and the *Axolotl* is let dwell in peace. To readers accustomed to the convulsive and spectacular style of journalistic science this book will seem the very orthodoxy of evolution. For all that, or, rather, because of that, it is probably the best introductory study at present available. It is not overloaded with detail, yet no essential detail is omitted.

After enumerating the several sources of evidence for the occurrence of evolution, Professor Kerr considers the mystery of the mechanism of evolution as explained in terms of Inheritance, Mendelism, and Natural Selection. The last of these leads to an excellent chapter on Animal Colouration, where due credit is given to an American artist, Mr. A. H. Thayer, for the appreciation of the phenomenon, and introduction of the use of "dazzle."

Professor Kerr emphasises the importance of realising that "in wild nature selection *never* ceases." It is continually operating to keep the organism directly adapted to its environment so that, as this changes, the organism changes with it.

The significant topic of communal evolution is briefly but carefully summarised. "A conclusion that seems quite clear is that the modern democratic community has now reached a condition which threatens its continued evolution with serious dangers, owing to the fact that while the community

itself has pressed onwards in its evolutionary progress, the training of its citizens . . . has not kept pace with this communal advance."

The problems of accounting for past events become almost insignificant in the face of the problems which the future is inevitably bringing to us and to our descendants.

Whether civilisation, wisely led, will ultimately attain to a stable inheritance, or, whether, assaulted from without and corrupted from within, our social system fall to ruin and our learning be lost utterly, is a question which, in the words of Sir Thomas Browne, "shall tax hardly the Judgment of Posterity."

Here some consolation may be derived from the study of evolution, which, if it does nothing else, at least impresses one with the sense that the resources of life are infinite.

Professor Graham Kerr has produced a stimulating and an instructive book, admirably illustrated and provided with a short selection of references. It has the disadvantage that it raises more questions than it even attempts to answer, but that, after all, is a characteristic of its subject-matter, the manifestation of life. W. F.

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PARNELL: THE LAST FIVE YEARS. By Sir Alfred Robbins. (Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d.)

THE PARNELL OF REAL LIFE. By William O'Brien. (Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

Of the making of books on Parnell there is no end. No statesman of the Victorian era, not even the leonine Gladstone, seems to have the same fascination for students of political history. For Parnell is already a legend, and though Mr. O'Brien in his new book rightly scorns the "transpontine drama" picturization of biographies like Mr. St. John Ervine's, a legend he will remain. A legend indeed, but not one of those "Curiosities of History" selected by Mr. Philip Guedella for pictorial treatment by writers like Mr. Ervine. We can hardly imagine any phrase more singularly inapplicable to the man of whom Dilke said "dealing with him is like dealing with a foreign power," than "a curiosity of history." Mr. Ervine's recent book is surely the least valuable contribution to Parnell literature that has yet appeared, in so much as it strives to perpetuate the already exploded idea of Parnell as—in Mr. O'Brien's words—"the man of mystery in his most fetching cloak and with his most conspiratorial whisper."

The two books now under review give us by far the most complete picture of Parnell the man and Parnell the leader that has yet appeared. Written as they are from entirely different standpoints, the one the detached but not unsympathetic impressions of a journalist and an Englishman, the other the intimate record of a Chief written by an able and devoted lieutenant, they present by a dovetailing process a full and striking portrait of the greatest Irishman of his day. It is a matter for regret that Sir Alfred Robbins' book, *Parnell: The Last Five Years*, did not appear in time to have Mr. O'Brien as commentator. "There are," says Sir Alfred, "four, perhaps five, living Irishmen who could tell much that is still hidden, but for cogent reasons they are not likely at any time to tell all." Mr. O'Brien is undoubtedly one of the four or five, and his comment on this statement would be extremely interesting.

Sir Alfred Robbins writes of Parnell with sympathy and sincerity, and with a good deal of knowledge. The Irish leader trusted him and confided in him, partly because, to use his own words, he never "leaked," and partly because the paper he represented, the "Birmingham Daily Post," although Unionist, had always treated him fairly. But yet, although Sir Alfred claims to have been "in intimate and frequent conference with Parnell during the last four years of his life," and to have found him at times "strangely communicative," we are left in some doubt as to whether he ever penetrated beneath the exterior man. The Parnell he knew had a "mesmeric eye," he was "haughty, aloof, and inscrutable," and not "explicable by ordinary formulas." He ruled his Party with a rod of iron, and even in the hour of triumph remained frigid and unbending.

"Parnell never forgot and never allowed his followers to forget that he was of Cambridge, and he insisted on being approached without familiarity. In a party which knew each other as Tim or Mick, Pat or Danny, the leader was never otherwise addressed than 'Mr.' One night, after an excitingly close division wherein, by clever tactics, the Nationalists had run the Government hard, a trusted but exuberant follower exclaimed joyfully to his imperturbable chief, as they came from the House, 'We did that well, Parnell.' 'Mr. Parnell,' frigidly corrected his leader, as he strode away."

This particular story, with which the name of Mr. Healy used to be associated, was scotched by Mr. T. P. O'Connor in his short biography of Parnell written thirty-four years ago; and we shall see, besides, that Mr. O'Brien's account of the chief's relations with the members of his Party is in striking contrast to this picture.

In his presentation of the political drama, Sir Alfred is on surer ground. He writes with graphic power and his picture of the unhappy Pigott in the witness-box before the Special Commission is unforgettable. But the chief interest of the book lies in the account, written from "inside" knowledge, of the intrigues which were active in influencing the fateful decisions arrived at in Committee Room 15.

"When battle was joined over the Irish leadership, Stanhope told me that Labouchere . . . was thoroughly tired of Parnell, who, in his opinion, had let the Liberals down badly over the divorce case, and that he was determined to get rid of him. While political flies went on buzzing on the wheel, Labouchere and Stanhope were oiling the axle. For days, it was uncertain whether they could screw up the majority of the Nationalists to fight Parnell to his face. . . . One night he (Stanhope) gleefully exclaimed, 'It's all over; we've got him!' And he told how, after much effort, they had so worked on a leading Nationalist's vanity as to insure his staunchly standing out against Parnell. No one outside knew of these intrigues and I could only indicate their results and not their progress."

And still more significant:

"A month after Parliament had risen in August, 1889, I was asked by one on the inside of the Liberal Unionist 'machine' whether

Parnell would be politically ruined by a divorce, the then recent Dilke instance being given as a promising precedent, and Captain O'Shea, it was added, being believed to be willing to take proceedings."

Sir Alfred points out that Labouchere was careful to leave no records of any of these intrigues and that not only is there not the slightest reference to these subterranean negotiations in the monumental biography of him which appeared a few years ago, but that it entirely ignores the divorce case and the subsequent proceedings. "For reasons of his own, Labouchere wanted to say as little as possible about the O'Sheas." In this connection, Sir Alfred might also have mentioned another curious point about the Labouchere biography, the fact that whilst Mr. T. M. Healy's letters to that Radical guerillo on the earlier political situation are reproduced at great length, none of those dealing with the final crisis is allowed to appear.

One other point deserves notice before we leave Sir Alfred's book. "I was told by one in closest touch with the Liberal-Nationalist negotiations that the advice in the letter to Parnell to withdraw from the leadership was so unpalatable to Mrs. O'Shea that she destroyed the communication without showing it to him." On this I can only remark that if this be true the letter was destroyed by that lady for reasons quite other than the one Sir Alfred suggests. There were deeps of political infamy surrounding the close of the tragedy that even the writer of this book, with his wide professional knowledge, has never plumbed.

In *The Parnell of Real Life* we have a fascinating study, written with the distinction of style which we expect from the author of *Evening Memories*, by that member of his brilliant group of lieutenants on whom he bestowed more affection than on any other. Mr. O'Brien was on intimate terms with Parnell as far back as 1878, and an entry in his journal for that year gives us a picture of the rising young leader:

"A sweet seriousness *au fond*, any amount of nervous courage, a delicate reserve without the smallest suspicion of hauteur; strangest of all, humour . . . As romantic as Lord Edward, but not to be shaken from prosier methods."

The superstitions which have intrigued so many of his biographers are not taken very seriously by Mr. O'Brien, to whom they always seemed "whimsicalities that amused him rather than beliefs that had any real influence." His personal relations with his Party are discussed at length and we find Mr. O'Brien demolishing once and for all many of the fictions that grew up about the time of the split and which have since been frequently repeated.

"The legend of Parnell as a mystery-man was the concoction of journalists who knew nothing of him except the caution with which he surrounded his personal movements, owing either to dangerous relationships with the secret societies, or to the fear of Government espionage, or later to the malignity with which newspaper spies in search of a sensation dogged his private life. In essence, he was an unaffected Irish country gentleman, with a genius for command and for doing Ireland's business."

And again :

"The strangest of all the delusions about Parnell was one amazingly rife at the time of the 'split,' that he was a greatly overrated leader, a *fainéant* who sucked the brains of his abler lieutenants Parnell towered amongst his marshals, an undisputed and beloved First Consul. But the most modest of potentates ; a strong hand certainly, but a gentle and cordial one. Although it was by a happy chance rather than by any deliberate choice of his own that his chief officers came together, his was the magnetism that held them together."

His sympathy with the physical force movement will surprise many who have come to regard him entirely as a constitutional leader. His only objection to armed insurrection was what he considered its impracticability. "Ireland," he said, remembering Washington's tactics, "is too small a country for a rebellion ; there is not room enough to run away"—a prophecy which time has shown to be a little wide of the mark. But doubtless the warfare that Parnell visualised was not of the guerillo order. Yet in spite of this cautious attitude we find him, when war was threatened between England and Russia in 1885 and when James O'Kelly and General Phil Sheridan had perfected plans for an invasion by Irish-American Civil War veterans, actually sending Mr. O'Brien to interview the Tzar's secret agent in London to discuss ways and means.

"The incident is worth recalling as an illustration—of which the secret archives of the first Boer War will supply a companion picture still more realistic—of that mixture of daring in extremities with no less daring moderation in the hour of victory, which was the essence of Parnell's character as a leader."

Mr. O'Brien deals fully and frankly with the tragic blunders and misunderstandings which followed the divorce court proceedings, and we are left in no manner of doubt that not only he himself, but practically the whole of the Party, would have clung to Parnell had they been in possession of the full facts of the case. Had they been aware of the fact that it was Morley, and not Gladstone, who was really responsible for first issuing and then publishing with such indecent haste the fatal "nullity of leadership" letter, that the whole divorce proceedings had been carefully planned by certain unscrupulous Tory politicians who found in the O'Sheas willing tools, and that they themselves were being used as catspaws by disgruntled wire-pullers in the Radical wing of Gladstone's party, it is a certainty that the scenes in Committee Room 15 would never have been enacted and the whole course of Irish history for the past thirty years would have been different.

Mr. O'Brien's own position—he was in America at the time the split occurred—was a peculiarly difficult one, and though (as he himself would probably be the first to admit) in the light of insufficient knowledge he took a wrong decision, yet the part he played in the Boulogne negotiations and the almost superhuman efforts he made to bring about an agreement will redound to his lasting credit. That Parnell fully appreciated this personal loyalty is

evidenced in a letter written in February, 1891, in which he thanks Mr. O'Brien for "the kindness and gentleness of spirit which you have shown to me throughout these negotiations."

The Parnell of Real Life is not likely to be surpassed as a striking and faithful portrait of the Man and the Leader. The figure that emerges from it is that of an outstanding personality, modest and unassuming, kindly and courteous; cautious at the council table but daring and resolute in action, a leader born to command; not only the greatest Irishman of his day, but one of the greatest Irishmen of all times.

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THE CANTAB. By Shane Leslie. (Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d. net).

In his latest book Mr. Shane Leslie has given us his memoirs of University life under the guise of fiction. His picture is largely photographic and several well-known personalities—Rupert Brooke, for example—are introduced under a more or less thin disguise. This method has been frequently tried before, and *The Cantab* will inevitably challenge comparison with *Simister Street*. To one who, knowing neither Oxford nor Cambridge, can take quite a detached view, Mr. Leslie's picture is much less convincing than Mr. Mackenzie's and his characterisation has not the same sure touch.

The Cantab is clever in places—clever with that sort of hard brilliance which the modern standards of wit among our younger novelists seem to demand. But there is about it all a great deal of unreality and a great deal of affectation. We do not believe for a moment in his impossible hero, the neurotic Edward, who is always so ready to weep at moments of crisis; and it is extremely difficult to believe that tears and emotional religiosity play such a large part in the intellectual life of Cambridge as Mr. Leslie would have us imagine.

For the rest, *The Cantab* is obviously out to shock, and there are some passages in which the continual introduction of the name of the Deity into descriptions, unnecessarily frank, of the amatory adventures of the hero's friend, leaves an impression that is decidedly disagreeable. One is left with a feeling of impatience that a genuine talent should be frittered away on obvious irrelevancies of this kind.

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THE INFORMER. Liam O'Flaherty. (Jonathan Cape, Ltd., London. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. O'Flaherty is not the first to discover Dublin for us. James Joyce did that for us some years ago, and we have not quite forgotten his discoveries, nor are we likely to. In *The Informer*, the publisher tells us, "the atmosphere of the Dublin streets and the slums is painted with life-like cunning," and we are invited to "an episode of real life stranger than fiction." Stranger than fiction, perhaps; but, above all, stranger than life. For the novelist has raked the slag-heaps of debased humanity with vicious zeal and zest. *The Informer* is the high-water mark of realism in modern Irish literature. Mr. O'Flaherty has created a phantasmagoria, a delirium whose shadows begin and end in strife. Yet, for all his power and mastery of detail, he has given us not one human figure. Gypo Nolan is a lumpy shadow, arousing pity and interest only when dissolved by death; Dan Gallagher is too

full of intellectual miscarriage to be human or real. His women are given blue eyes, but they are denied souls. Withal, there are too many ideas at work in this novel striving for utterance, and the articulation remains sadly imperfect. Truth is beauty, beauty truth. Degas could make a washerwoman beautiful, or strip the tawdriness from a ballet girl, for the true purpose of art is to beautify and not to brutalise. Mr. O'Flaherty has failed in that purpose; and has succeeded instead in submerging that lively part of his genius which gave us such remarkable pieces of peasant life as *Spring Sowing* and *Going into Exile*. His youth is too dynamic. He possesses too much energy, too little patience; and his prose-work suffers accordingly, though no small part of his attractive talent is the capability of tempestuously and rapidly creating his characters and atmosphere. So he has written in *The Informer* a sensational novel which will, no doubt, be best appreciated by sedate English parsons who have grown somewhat weary of *le genre ennui* of Meredith and Hardy, and by those in Ireland who have read with patience rather than pleasure *The Real Charlotte*. P. W.

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THE CATTLE DRIVE IN CONNAUGHT, AND OTHER POEMS. By Austin Clarke.
George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. 5s. net.

One knows wizardry when it appears, no matter what the mask. With the English language steeped in their souls from earliest infancy some of our younger writers are making valiant attempts to over-ride its potency and mould it to the embodiment of a forgotten language and culture. Yet one thing may be affirmed. Though the Irish language is languishing, and Irish culture only a memory, the spiritual fact at the basis of Irish nationality is in essence indestructible. And it seems to me that Mr. Austin Clarke has caught at least a flying fragment of its wizardry in his verse. The language of his work is English. But one cannot trace its origin by saying Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope or Wordsworth. His language is a mask in a subtler sense than the fact that language is always a mask for the poet. And his merit as a poet is only made the greater when one realises that his inspiration has to filter through two strata before it can find expression. I am one of those who think of nationhood not as an ultimate, but as a guise. We must all finally mingle in the unity of essential being. But before that consummation our national entity has its individual duties, its individual wizardry. And Mr. Clarke is boldly and capably flying the flag of the Irishman's approach to the frontiers of the art of the written word.

It is inevitable that he should be judged in conjunction with those writers to whom English is both tradition and actuality. Comparing him with modern English poets one finds in Mr. Clarke an extraordinary clarity and pureness of conception and expression which they as a class do not possess. He also exhibits a delicacy and fragility of phrasing which betokens a mind not capable of the impress of over-mastering emotions. And this I think is an abiding characteristic of Irish literature as opposed to Irish nationality. In our literature we are fanciful, lyrical and unusual. In our nationality we are impetuous and storm-fed.

Mr. Clarke gives us grace and benignity in his verse, a polished precision of utterance in his lines that is always charming and at times ravishing. And

in the longest poem in this book, and that from which it derives its title "The Cattle-drive in Connaught," he has entered and conquered in a bold assertive manner the province of the literary impressionist.

I don't want to cant. I realize greatly the value of the work Mr. Clarke has done. But I think, if it were possible for him to forget Ireland and Irish for a moment, he might do something that would astonish and entrance the English speaking world. The only alternative is—and I commend it to Mr. Clarke—to give up English altogether and work only in Irish.

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THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE. By Willa Cather. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

The Professor's House is not a well-planned novel, with strong scenes, or fully developed characters. But there is insight, and delicate writing in it, and surely a reviewer should not be churlish? Book II, Tom Outland's story is a delightful piece of writing. From the standpoint of the novel one feels it is an inset. But what matter? By itself it is as charming a piece of nervous, high-tension prose one could wish for. And then I like the change that comes to the Professor in Book III when nature and loneliness call him, and he finds himself forgetting human beings. The author uncovers a layer of fundamental humanity here that the writers of more highly coloured, decorative, exciting novels never discover.

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STORY LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS. By Harriette Brower. (Harrap & Co., Ltd., London. 7s. 6d. net).

Simple and unaffected stories of the lives of the greater composers, with admirably reproduced portraits. A glance at the pictures of Bach and Greig reveals volumes to the enlightened mind. Bach faces us serene, intuitive, self-contained, formative; Greig gloomy, weak-chinned, untidy, the apotheosis of the slovenly mediocre, with gleams. This handsome, well produced book would be of great use to the young mind interested in music.

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POETRY AND CRITICISM. By Edith Sitwell. (The Hogarth Press, London. 2s. 6d.).

Miss Sitwell is pungent, sarcastic and somewhat disjointed in this essay. I do not think her philosophical approaches are evenly laid down. She is not quite sure about what she is tilting at. And her quotation from Blake cuts many ways, and might be readily used against her. She likes to think that all good poetry is reviled and misunderstood in its day. Well, there is no harm in that. And it may console her to be praised when she does, if ever, write bad verse herself. But I think there is just a little too much mental pride about her attitude, perhaps more unexpressed than expressed. Her analysis of her own poem is a case in point. She is so serious about it that she forgets one might not see her explanations. So if you do not understand the poem and cannot follow the explanations, well, one might ask, where indeed are you?

But it is good to see her taking poetry in dead earnest. She may not be doing what she thinks she is doing, but her spirit will undoubtedly be contagious, and some good will be done in perhaps some far-off unexpected way. For we must all follow our own furrows and leave the stars to shine as they may.

But one word in closing. Do not be too cock-sure, too pedagogic, Miss Sitwell. For the great things of art do not grow, nor are they to be attained by taking thought. They exist already, everywhere, full-formed and in perfection, and may be apprehended through the lowly path of the beatitudes. And I mistrust a little the poets who know with such deadly certainty just exactly why they used a particular word in such a way and place.

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A GREEN JACKDAW. *Adventures in Parody.* By M. J. MacManus. Dublin : (The Talbot Press, Limited. 2s. 6d. net.)

A parodist is one who is unusually sensitive to impressions and who has a peculiar notion of contrast. A parody is a caricature in which we recognise the original at a glance. It is altogether wrong to describe a parody as a composition in which an author's characteristics are ridiculed by imitation. This is a dictionary meaning : let it go at that. A good parody is a treat, and the author of a good parody is a man to be shaken warmly by his good right hand and invited in *for* a treat. Mr. MacManus is an excellent parodist, but unfortunately money is scarce in Dublin just now.

In this book we have parodies on English, Irish and American writers. The worst of the book is that one would like to quote the whole lot of it. This, of course, would be unfair to the author ; besides the Editor would be angry.

But we may take one or two extracts.

Here are two verses of *The Mountainy Singer* (Joseph Campbell) :—

I've danced at the tinker's wedding,
By the lake of the mountainy water,
I've heard the roar of the tinker's curse,
I've courted the tinker's daughter.

I've been at the fair and the pattern,
I've prayed at the holy well,
I've pulled an oar in the Aran man's boat
And he as drunk as hell.

If that's not a parody on a renaissance of Irish literature, as well as on Joseph Campbell, then—

Here is F. R. Higgins, one of the very best of Irish poets :—

O pliant girl, I would walk wet miles
To Ballynagurteen town in sweet Mayo,
And I twisting a stick in the heel of my fist
And breaking the edge of my fast on a juicy sloe.
Hurry, darling, and pity my poor feet.

Mr. MacManus is no joke.

P. K.

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POEMS, 1909-1925. By T. S. Eliot. (Faber and Gwyer, London. 7s. 6d. net.)

There are in this book poems intelligible and unintelligible. From the first sort something definite can be gathered. The others can only be dealt with by way of conjecture and inference. It appears to me that Mr. Eliot's earlier and understandable verse exhibits poetic sensibilities that he might have

cultivated to something considerable and fine. But he allowed himself to be too much preoccupied with a phase of human life that is futile and barren at its core. One is tickled for a moment in reading lines like these from "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock":—

"For I have known them all already, known them all :
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons ;"

"I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

The appeal here is to a false sense of self-satisfied superiority in the reader. One is inclined to snigger and say : "Just like what a contemptible little ass like Prufrock would say." And then one suddenly realises that Mr. Eliot is in dead earnest in this poem. This is art to him. This is inspiration. This is a subject worthy of his muse. This is his vision—life trying to reflect itself in what is mean and contemptible. But it can't be done. There is a whole range of amorphous mists in human personalities that cannot take on the outline of anything real. They are shapeless and formless and turgid like fog. They envelop and swamp our perception. And they have a nasty tendency to turn into something horrid and twisting and vampire like. And this is exactly how Mr. Eliot's earlier verse affects me. At first I am pleased and excited by the unexpected crunching of these cinder-like phrases. Then I grow aware that I am being closed in, hampered and confined by something small and narrow, bleak and desolate. Then comes a nasty breath, slimy and snake-like—and I stop repulsed and perhaps a little frightened as at the suggestion of some nameless unspeakable sense of degradation. And this is mainly characteristic of most of the poems in irregular metres, all of which exhibit a remarkable fluency and appropriateness of phrasing.

The poems written in regular and common place metres are more definitely intellectual in scope. They do not affect me with the same shuddering tremor of repulsion. They are close clipt, shorn and bare. Their lines stand out like charred and abortive branches of blasted trees, petrified and frigid with the horrid perversity of twisted and gnarled things spoiled and gone astray. But they have no power to wound or hurt the reader's susceptibilities. The touch, the whisper of malignancy has gone from them. They represent the intermediate stage of Mr. Eliot's poetic development. His style has now become cryptic and well advanced on the way to the complete unintelligibility of "The Waste Land." And though I have failed to understand "The Waste Land" and much of "The Hollow Men," I have read them, and in doing so, certain conjectures and inferences have arisen in my mind respecting the total output of his work. I think Mr. Eliot is trying to weld together in his poetry, to fuse into poetic vitality two incompatible and wholly divergent elements. He has an abnormally developed sense of the utter insignificance and hollowness of modern civilised life, and at the same time he has the brooding sense—and what poet has not—of deity hovering over and encompassing humanity. These ideas are irreconcilable, they cannot exist together, and yet his fundamental thought

seems to be that they are capable of being so allied that deity may be discerned even "among velteties and carefully caught regrets." And it is this striving after the impossible—for such an objective is wholly impossible of attainment—that has caused the rupture in the fabric of his poetic endowment. The unreal basis of his earlier work is a foundation on which nothing can be built.

In this earlier work Mr. Eliot is preoccupied with human motives so worn out and decadent that they have lost all grip on any sort of actuality. They are the fragments of hysteria and hallucination, and can reflect at best but a mimic imitation of being. They can result in no coherent development. They are not formed out of the basic stuff of which art and life are made. Their breath is disintegration, their destiny dissipation. And in following in their track, Mr. Eliot has been pursuing a will o' the wisp which has led him into the bogs and quagmires of "The Waste Land," a veritable mirage of nothingness. For Mr. Eliot's outstanding offence is that he is trying to give shape and form to concepts that are in essence shapeless and formless, not because of their connection with infinity, but because they belong to a self-constituted region of supposition. His mind is formed for better things than he has done in "The Waste Land," or in the distorted crypticism of his intermediate verse. But in his earlier days, in the first flights of his fitting fancies, he yielded to artistic temptation, and fell. He built his work upon that which was insubstantial and in his maturity his house has come toppling down about him in the bewildering incoherency of "The Waste Land." It is but another instance of the working of the Cosmic law that dooms all that is erected on shadows to the corrective catastrophe of self-annihilation.

T. K

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THE ARCHITECT AND HIS WORK. (The Royal Institute of British Architects, 9 Conduit Street, London W.)

This pamphlet is small in size but large in scope, and is published with real authority. The Royal Institute of British Architects acted wisely in not only taking the public into their confidence, but also letting them know exactly what are the functions of the Architect, and the advantages and paramount importance of the profession to everyone, whether he lives in town or country. If a fault could be found with the pamphlet it is that rather too much stress is laid on the merely technical side of the profession, and however valuable that may be, it is but secondary to the chief role of the Architect, who must be, above all things, an artist. The hand of the artist is as unmistakeable in the humblest bungalow as it is in the most spacious public building. The reading of this pamphlet would be beneficial to everyone even remotely concerned with building work.

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A COMMERCIAL AND HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE WORLD'S AIRWAYS. (Francis J. Field, Ltd., 57-58 New Street, Birmingham. 2s. 6d.).

The far-sighted book collector will get and hold this volume. It is the first volume of the aerial Bradshaw, so to speak. To anyone not closely in touch with aviation matters, the maps and schedules would be really startling. It seems only the other day that the aeroplane was an interesting, though dangerous toy, and now we see the map of Europe covered with a spider web,

each line of which represents an airway in commercial operation. Germany, in particular, is developing commercial flying on a really great scale. And the prosaic touch is not wanting to set-off these modern marvels. Details are furnished of such common-place matters as stamps and labels for Air Mails, and particulars of fares and charges for luggage. Ireland just comes into the picture shown by this volume. Her geographical position makes it certain that in subsequent issues she will occupy a more prominent position in the new way of world travel.

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ABBEYS. By M. R. James, Litt.D., F.S.A. (The Great Western Railway, Paddington, London. 5s.)

This book is a justification of all railways. It is a description (written by a master hand) of the great Abbeys on, or near the Great Western Railway. The author is Dr. James, whose name in the literary world was first established by work very different in character to this. Dr. A. Hamilton Thompson contributes a chapter on "Monastic Life and Buildings," which serves as an excellent introduction. The coloured plates are very good indeed, and the drawings are both a joy, and a tremendously striking example of the fact that in the presentation of architectural work the camera cannot hope to compete with the pencil. A glance at the list of names is enough to start a train of thought embracing all English history, and if one could, one would certainly pack a bag and study a Bradshaw. Glastonbury, so old that its real age is a matter of violent debate amongst the learned; Malmesbury, founded by an Irishman; Tewkesbury; Great Malvern; Much Wenlock; Tintern—ringing names, all of them. The author deplores the vandalism which marked the Suppression—done too by the order of a King who boasted himself scholar! Will Dr. James see to it that in the next edition the ground plans have the orientation marked on them? We moderns could learn much therefrom.

J. F. M.

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BEETHOVEN. By Paul Bekker. Translated and adapted from the German by M. M. Bozman. (J. M. Dent & Son, Ltd., London. 10s. 6d. net.)

This is much more than a book written by a musician and from a musician's standpoint. The author is a practical musician as well as a writer, and he knows the professional aspect of the art. But though this side is most competently and adequately treated, Mr. Bekker has a much wider range in view in his work. And it is his philosophical basis which frees his writing from the pedantry and pettiness so frequently to be found in books about music. One would gather that Beethoven is Mr. Bekker's hero. He does not, it is true, gloss over some details of his life which are not exactly consistent with nobility of character. But Mr. Bekker shows an intense appreciation of the profounder aspects of Beethoven's genius and inspiration, and no one can share this feeling, even in a small way, without recognising that a spirit of reverential devotion is the proper attitude in which to deal with Beethoven if one is to understand in any measure the greatness of his work.

Though, as I have said, Mr. Bekker enters into a minute examination of every technical detail connected with Beethoven's development as an artist, I think

it best to give prominence to the broader basis of his work. 'His book,' he writes, 'attempts to present the idea of freedom as the basis of all his (Beethoven's) inspiration and to follow in his works his changing presentment of freedom as a political and cultural, a personal, a religious, and finally as an ethical concept. By this means it is possible to give Beethoven his place in the history of human development. He has expressed the thought of Kant, Schiller and their contemporaries, and the struggles of the revolutionary epoch, in terms of music. His philosophic attitude conditioned his position as the greatest of all instrumental composers in musical history. The world of abstract thought which clamoured in him for expression demanded a correspondingly pure and absolute form of musical revelation. The great epoch of idealism and classicism in Germany found its most perfect artistic expression in his idealistic instrumental music, not depending on any connection with the sung or spoken word.' T. K.

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HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE ROYAL AFRICAN CORPS. By Major J. J. Crooks. (Dublin : Browne and Nolan).

Major Crooks, late Colonial Secretary of Sierra Leone, has an established reputation as a regimental historian, and as the author of two able works : *A History of Sierra Leone*, and *Records of the Gold Coast Settlements*. He belongs to the order of scientific chroniclers to whom the new fact, the official document, the verified data only, are of importance. He treats his thesis with the precision of a mathematical demonstration. The present work has the same scholarly characteristics of its predecessors. It traces the history of the Royal African Corps from its formation, 1800, to its dissolution in 1821. The official records of the regiment, the London Gazette, Parliamentary Papers, and Army Lists, have been ransacked to wise purpose. Nothing seems to have escaped his assiduous attention. The external eye-witness, Golberry, has been called upon as evidence of the state of Goree in 1786, with illuminating effect. The malign fate that pursued the United Irishmen, who had to enlist in the army and navy of Great Britain—a subject that still awaits its historian—after the crushing of the Rising of 1798—is illustrated, in a minor degree, in this record.

Major Crooks is to be congratulated on a sound piece of work.

SEAN GHALL.

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THIS QUARTER. Edited by Ernest Walsh and Ethel Moorhead. (Il Convegno, Via Borgo Spesso, 7, Milano, Italy. Volume I. No. 2. Price 7s. 6d.).

Here are 347 pages of what the editors consider the best prose and verse of modern writers in English, with a supplement containing examples of music by George Antheil, a young American composer, who we are told is making an opera out of Mr. Joyce's "Ulysses" entitled "The Cyclops." There are also two good reproductions of photographs of James Joyce, by Sylvia Beach, and pictures of George Antheil, Ernest Hemingway, and Padraic Colum, the last being from Mr. Patrick Tuohy's oil painting. The chief literary contributors as set out on the cover are Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Carl Sandburg, W. Carlos Williams, Robert McAlmon, Ernest Hemingway, Emanuel Carnevali Kay Boyle, Carlo Linati. The last named is an Italian writer who contributes a delightful little fantasy called *Bluebeard's Last Wife*, translated by Mr.

Carnevali. 107 pages are devoted to verse, all unrhymed, for the Editors do not believe in rhyme any more. Then follows 174 pages of prose. At page 283 with *Editorial*, things begin to get real lively. Here Editor Walsh chiefly appears. And from page 319 to 335 he spreads himself out full-fledged in four reviews.

There is not space to write about *This Quarter* in detail, though personally I would like to do so. I must be brief, and summarise. Mr. Walsh, the moving spirit of *This Quarter*, is young and American. I think he has grasped somewhere in his consciousness an essential idea about literature. And though I dislike his mannerisms and his impudence, fundamentally I sympathise with his views. But he doesn't know everything. He scoffs at Saintsbury for suggesting that poetry is more sound than sense, and yet he prints Mr. Joyce, whose sentences are rapidly developing into this condition. He jeers at all our accepted critics of literature, including Shaw, and yet I think that most of Mr. Walsh's remarks are contained in essence in a paragraph of Shaw's. Shaw's words are: "A true original style is never achieved for its own sake—effectiveness of assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none: he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Disprove his assertion after it is made, yet its style remains."

Again, Mr. Walsh thinks of art as something we exercise ourselves about after "the urgent mandates of the flesh have been taken care of." It is the thought of a well-fed man whose material wants are assured. I am convinced, and I think the best intellects of the world agree, that art must rest upon a recognition of the primacy of spiritual mandates. And now that I come to think of it, I find that Mr. Walsh's plea for literature as the one free art is a commonplace of literary experience. Shakespeare was an inferior actor, Burns a ploughman, Keats the son of an ostler. Mr. Walsh is only telling us in modern American slang that which the world has always known. And amongst living writers I remember that Miguel de Unamona broaches the whole matter in a much superior manner.

And finally there is frequently something about Mr. Walsh's way of getting at things that I can't stand at any price. Much as I have appreciated *This Quarter*, and its very fine array of prose writers, I would rather it had never existed than read a paragraph like this:

"'With beauty like a tightened bow'—that's it. The phrase that made Mr. Yeats famous. And eleven lines of baldness around it that no hair tonic on earth or in Mr. Yeats' heavens could grow even a charge of dandruff to dust over the smooth perfectly polished nothing of the crown."

For utter meanness of conception, cheapness and triviality of expression, for general banality and idiocy, this is, in Mr. Walsh's own American slang, "the dizzy limit."

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THE MASK. January, 1926. (Box 444, Florence, Italy. Price 2s. 6d.).

The January *Mask* is distinguished by a fighting streak that runs through its contents. In an article entitled "The Colossus: G.B.S." by E.G.C., Shaw comes in for a pretty severe handling. The main point is that he is anything

and everything but a dramatist. The writer acclaims him a journalist of genius, a noble man, a religious teacher, and so on, but will admit him no standing within a theatre. And he does not mince his words. But I am afraid "slating" Shaw is of little use, except to relieve one's own personal feelings.

In another article, "What is it you want," by Yoo-no-hoo, the long suffering British public are castigated for their treatment of the Theatre. They cannot recognise what is good, they patronise the wrong people, and they are more interested in their own acting coming into the stalls, than what takes place on the stage. If the British public had nerves to feel, they would wilt before this biting satire. But like Shaw they are tough and hardened.

Then Mr. Henry Phips turns the assault on Pirandello. He thinks that Pirandello has arbitrarily drawn into the Southern atmosphere, where the sun has for ages taught the Italians the true wisdom of life, a blighting breath of that enquiring, introspective spirit that so often mars the work of Northern dramatists such as Ibsen, Strindberg, Tchekov. He has one virtue. He is easy to read. "But there ends Pirandello as a fine dramatist, for the rest is all gasps, jerks and anxiety: in short, he denies the masters."

In "Thanks to Mr. George Moore," discussing an old essay of Moore's on "Mummer-Worship," the actors get a touch of *The Masks'* caustic whip. But the writer E.G.C. throws out a suggestion that, if adopted, might revolutionise theatrical affairs. He thinks the day of the outside dramatic author is rapidly drawing to a close, and he foresees the time of a return to the methods of *La Commedia dell' Arte*, when the actors made their own plays. "There were no plays written. They grew, like hardy annuals. Phrases as well as characters picked from the streets, from the houses, from everywhere the actors went, supplied all they needed." And in this way E.G.C. sees the possibility of restoring the creative side of the Actors profession which has so long been dormant. Certainly a most alluring suggestion and one that lights up vistas of a fresh approach to drama.

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THE NEW CRITERION. A Quarterly Magazine. January, 1926. (Faber and Gwyer, Ltd., London. 5s. net).

Mr. T. S. Eliot is very interesting in his ideas about the functions and scope of a literary review in the first article in this number. He is content with a somewhat conventional definition of "literature" for this purpose as being "the beautiful expression of particular sensation and perception, general emotion and impersonal ideas," and he lays emphasis on the necessity that a review should indicate a definite tendency. At present he thinks "there is a tendency—discernible even in Art—toward a higher and clearer conception of Reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by Reason."

It is hardly fair to try to express his thought fully by quotations, as he is carefully guarded and cautious in expression. But it is quite evident that he has no sympathy with the suggestion that the basis of the universe might possibly be non-rational, and he leaves no loop-hole whatever for the incursion of the sub-conscious. His position might be well summed up:—

"In all God's acts (as Plato cries
He doth) He should geometrize."

It is strange to find Mr. Eliot nonplussed. He tells us Mr. Wells, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Bertrand Russell "all hold curious amateur religions based apparently upon amateur or second-hand biology, and on *The Way of all Flesh*." And he adds in a note "Very different from the religion of Mr. Middleton Murray, which I am totally unable to understand!" Mr. Eliot's usual omniscience is very neatly indicated in the following remark: "At two points, if not more, in his long series of plays Mr. Shaw reveals himself as the artist whose development was checked at puberty."

The rest of the contents of *The New Criterion* are charmingly diversified. Mr. Frederick Manning writes with much insight on "A French Criticism of Newman." "On Being Ill" is a delightful essay by Miss Virginia Woolf. Mr. E. H. C. Oliphant represents literary research in a valuable article entitled "Marlowe's hand in Arden of Feversham." There is part II of a story by Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and in "The last first night," by Ada Leverson, dealing with the first performance of *The Importance of being Earnest*, some intricate and personal memories of Oscar Wilde are recorded. The reviews are excellent and the various articles on Music, the Theatre, New York Chronicle, etc., are all most capably and interestingly done.

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We have received from Messrs. A. and C. Black, Ltd., 4, 5 and 6 Soho Square, London W.1, a copy of *The Writers' and Artists' Year Book* for 1926. The little book holds between its cheerful red covers a vast amount of information as indispensable to the editor as to the literary aspirant. It is in every way worthy of praise.

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SOME BOOK CATALOGUES.

The new spring catalogue of Messrs. John and Edward Bumpus, 350 Oxford Street, London, offers a feast of good things to the collector with unlimited means. Among the more important items I notice Bretonne's *Monument du Costume* (1789) with plates after Moreau. This is priced at £90. It will be remembered that a Moreau item fetched almost exactly the same figure at the recent dispersal sale of the Duke of Leinster's library in Dublin. Another interesting rarity is the *De libero Arbitrio* of Erasmus (1524) in a unique binding specially done by John Reynes for Henry VIII. This is surely not dear at £36. To come nearer our own day we find such interesting items as the first Indian edition of Kipling's *City of Dreadful Night*, for which ten guineas is asked, and the 8-volume set of W. B. Yeats's collected works (1908) which is offered at £5 15s. A cheap item is a first edition of George Moore's trilogy *Hail and Farewell*, priced at £3 5s. A few years ago these three volumes would have fetched more than twice this figure.

The fifty-second catalogue published by the house of P. J. and A. E. Dobell, 8 Bruton Street, London, is a production of extreme interest to autograph collectors. Its salient features are important autograph letters of Samuel Richardson, documents signed by Napoleon and Manuscripts of Wilkie Collins. The Napoleonic items cannot be considered highly priced at from £2 to £3. For Irish readers there is an especial interest in the offer of six autographed letters of Maria Edgeworth for £2 ros., and two of Justin MacCarthy for half-a-crown!

For the collector of limited means we would recommend a glance at list No. 29, which we have received from Messrs. Low, New Market Gallery, Aberdeen, which is principally concerned with modern authors. In it we notice the first edition of J. E. Flecker's first book of poems, *The Bridge of Fire* (1907) for the absurdly low price of 10s. 6d. Other cheaply-priced First Editions are Masfield's *Dauber* (1913) for 15s. and *Q's Troy Town* (1888) for 4s. 6d.

The new catalogue of Messrs. Elkin Mathews, Cork Street, London, contains as usual, a special section devoted to Dr. Johnson and his circle. A copy of the First Edition of Boswell's *Life*, is offered for £45, which seems cheap in view of the fact that this book is bound to increase steadily in value. The first Dublin edition of the same work, printed the following year, is quoted at £4 10s. With regard to later editions, it is curious to note that the sixth is priced substantially higher than the second, third, fourth or fifth editions. In the section devoted to eighteenth century literature we notice the First Edition of Christopher Smart's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1752) priced at £3 3s. A very fine copy of the same book was picked up at the recent Carton Library sale in Dublin for a few shillings. Amongst the modern First Editions we find Thomas MacDonagh's *Lyrical Poems* for £2 5s. and Synge's *Playboy* (now a rare item) for £5 10s. Altogether, a very interesting collection and one that caters for many tastes.

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As we go to press we have received a bundle of catalogues which seem to present, even at a first glance many features of quite unusual interest. Mr. W. H. Robinson, 4-6 Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has carried out a most successful invasion of Ireland and has borne off in triumph the fine old Library which for so many years found a home in the family mansion, Lucan House. The original owner of this noble collection was that famous Mrs. Elizabeth Vesey, "first of the Blue-Stockings," and friend of everyone who *was* anyone in 18th century world of letters. By way of preface to this really fine catalogue Mr. Ross Balfour supplies a short and interesting account of Mrs. Vesey and her famous circle. For the modest sum of two shillings you may add to your collection of "catalogues to keep" one which certainly deserves its place there.

To the first catalogue issued by The Dublin Book Agency we extend a very hearty welcome, not only by reason of the many "firsts" and association copies of our modern Irish poets and novelists contained in it, but because such enterprise is badly needed amongst our Dublin book shops. We would strongly advise those collectors who have not already done so to write for a copy of this catalogue, which is sent gratis on application, to Marino Villa, Malahide Road, before all the treasures in it have gone to England, or even further afield.

From Messrs. Dulau, 34-36 Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, come two catalogues as distinguished in their appearance as in their contents, one consisting of Rare and Interesting old books, the other of Fine Arts and First Editions (mostly of the "Moderns").

Mr. Frank Hollings, 7 Great Turnstile, Holborn, has also, in his Catalogue No. 142, for the most part specialised on the "newer sort," and amongst the notable things offered by him are "runs" of the Daniel, Kelmscott, Nonesuch, Vale and other presses which are the glory of modern English typography.

Another fine collection of these books from famous presses is offered by Messrs. Bowes & Bowes, of 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge, whose latest list also includes 10 pages of modern Firsts at very reasonable prices.

From the same firm comes a short but fascinating catalogue of Prints, "examples of the work of some of the younger etchers," (with 16 well-reproduced examples of their plates) and a list of "Books about Books, MSS., Printing, Binding, Authors and Portraits."

To collectors of works of Scotch and "Dissenting" interest, Mr. John Grant, 31 George IV. Bridge, Edinburgh, offers a rare field of voyage and discovery for his latest list consists of almost 2,000 items and at least half of these are of these or allied interest and contain things of the utmost rarity.

Altogether a very delectable bundle for a book-man, and only time and space deny us the pleasure of enlarging on its many merits. T. C.